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PUNCH

Vol. CCXXXV No. 6177

DECEMBER 31 1958



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If you wish to have *Punch* sent to your home each week, send £2 16s. 0d.* to the Publisher, *Punch*, 20 Bouverie Street, London, E.C.4.

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CHARIVARIA

THE year's juvenile delinquency news ended on a pleasantly Regency note with the item about a Croydon lad going for another with a swordstick in a row over "a card gambling debt."

HINTS on hunting for the "working man" have been given by the Albrighton Hunt, and include the advice: "Try to see without being seen, hear without being heard." Nothing about trying to hunt without being hunted.

COOLLY ignoring next year's developments in the field of artificial moons and man-made satellites, *The Times* announces its publication of "The Night Sky in 1959."

PERHAPS there was nothing particularly sensational in the *News of the World* disclosure that by giving the correct details and paying a fee readers could "get the birth certificate of the woman



next door." But at least it provided a section of British womanhood with a basis for an absolutely original New Year's resolution.

THE HEADLINE "Seven-Year-Old Boy Returns Home as Girl" may well celebrate the last sex-change of the Old Year. New Year parents had better get busy revising those old apophthegms about boys will be boys.

POLICE called to Mr. Rex Harrison's home in Chelsea found that it had been broken into but that nothing had been stolen. No doubt the thief, realizing whose house he was in, thought that Mr. Harrison already had all the publicity he needed.

A ROAD safety organization booklet says "When you climb behind the steering wheel and start the engine let your face



break into a faint smile." That's easy. It's when you climb behind the wheel and can't that it's difficult.

A LONG-STANDING transport anomaly will be rectified next year when penalties for misbehaviour on buses will go up from 40s. to £5, thus bringing them more into line with the fares.

THE independent airline which proposes to fly a passenger to Trinidad and back for £165 as against the £283 10s. charged by other companies will naturally not be as lavish with its complimentary refreshments. However, the others will still have their work cut out to convince customers that they're getting £118 10s.-worth of champagne cocktails.

The Spoil-sport

I COULD enjoy this New Year's Day,

I think, a great deal more,
Had someone not seen fit to say
That five and twenty years away
Lies 1984.

AMONG the daily crop of *My Fair Lady* seat-appeals on the front page of *The Times* perhaps the most significant recently was that seeking an exchange date for "party of fourteen." This raises anew the oddly seasonal practice of theatre-going by herd, and it would not surprise me to hear that Drury Lane has received mysterious cancellations for the two "fourteen" nights from ticket-holders who prefer to go in couples, and would prefer that everyone else went in couples too. Parties of fourteen exhibit several undesirable features. They get more fun out of *being* a party of fourteen than they do from the play; they, for some reason, drop more handbags, order more ice-creams, rustle more chocolate-paper, shout more family confidences, than any fourteen separate individuals; worst of all, they give the impression that the other 2,233 members of the audience (Drury Lane seats 2,247) are merely the supporting cast to their leads. However, in this case, fellow audience-members are not likely to be the only sufferers. How would you like a family Christmas dinner where *fourteen* people were telling about how they went to see *My Fair Lady*?

FOR years and years and years, writes a Northern Irish correspondent, bars in Belfast have been open from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m., while those in the towns and villages with a population of less than five thousand have had to close at 9 p.m. And a very good law it was, too. For city visitors, accustomed to the rigour of punctual closing, would move out at the call of "time," leaving

MR. SHERMAN ADAMS is writing a book about his five and a half



"And smug. Tells teacher he still has some unbroken resolutions left over from 1958."

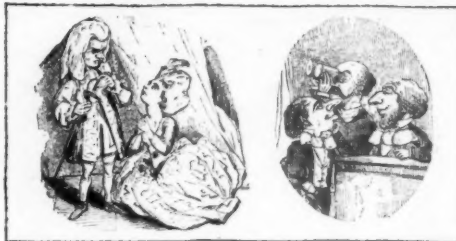
ON the eve of election year the Opposition might well start thinking about rechristening themselves. The word "Labour," with its suggestion of gnarled hands and pumice stone, is no longer attractive to people climbing out of the lower income brackets, but no really suitable alternative offers itself. "Socialist" still means beards, corduroys and sandals; "Union" would confuse the Unionists; "Progressive" commits the party to the politically dangerous expedient of progress; "Liberal" would be ideal (accuracy not being a must in party-naming) but is already booked; "Left" is next door to "Red"; "Nationalizationist" is open to the same sort of objection as "Union"; and so on. Perhaps the best thing after all would be for the Labour party to wait a few more years until the Tories have forgotten the name Canning invented. "Conservative" will then be available, and that would suit the unions admirably.

PRINCE PHILIP



"Hear any bells, Puss?"

THE NEW BOOK OF SNOBS



In 1846-7 Thackeray wrote "The Snobs of England" in PUNCH, later reprinted as "The Book of Snobs." In this series snobbery is brought up to date, but the title decorations are from Thackeray's own drawings.

PHILIP HOPE-WALLACE on The Theatre



IT would be too simple and therefore sport-spoiling to assert that there is no real snobbery now in the theatre save that feigning of love where no love is felt. Even the older and funnier sorts of snobbery linger in their primordial form; as for the inverted form, it positively burgeons; but more of that later.

Even the clothes thing can still convulse us. The débutante in long white gloves on long white nights yawning her life away through the twilight of the gods may be a dodo now, but many a male martyr to music slipping into a boiled shirt just after lunch at mid-summer to visit Glyndebourne knows that, in this as in other things, the more one "changes," *plus c'est un* bit too much of a good *chose*.

It still depends on the angle of vision too. Pamela aloft in the gallery, nursing her strength to let fly her first night broadside "Tripe, load of tripe, take it off!" surveys all below her as beneath her. "Load of snobs."

Down in the stalls it may be rather different. Into this plush arena comes a mackintoshed matron and her son wearing a school cap. No sooner have they taken their seats than a sizzling request is piped from two rows behind: "Will you kindly take off your cap, young man, this is the Royal Opera house!" To which the mother, like a lioness defending her whelps, snarls back "Revoltin' snobbery!" Just like that. As if any snobbery were not the spice of life and half the fun anyway.

Happily the impressionable are always with us. I met, even quite recently, a manservant and his cook-wife who

averred that at their last place "Only titled people came to the house." Similarly, seated, starry-eyed among the hard-faced kings of the garment industry and their molls, surrounded by venal critics and more venal managers, a country cousin may still have the illusion that she is surrounded by "society people." Ought we not to foster such happy beliefs in the theatre—that temple of illusion? I for one believe that dressing up for the theatre is the least harmful of snobberies and wholly approve of it so long as I don't have to do it myself. What should not be countenanced is the starlet who *pour épater* the press photographers comes sporting jeans and an army greatcoat. But then that is the trouble with snobbery; it so easily goes into reverse.

If dress snobbery has largely gone out—went out perhaps with the house lights in about 1892 when opera began to be played in the dark, for it seemed such a shame to put on all those diamonds to sit on the bottom of the Rhine in German—there still remains the ever potent facial expression. Do you not know the Look, at once calm and commanding, ready to quell the furtive chocolate-eater in *Hamlet*? And what of the look of silent, watchful merriment appropriate to Molière in French? The wooden, unshockable mask

for Tennessee. The relaxed and limpid, can't-crush-me smile for the sublimities of O'Neill's last hour or two?

Like hypocrisy, the homage vice pays to virtue, this kind of facial snobbery is often but the need to love the highest when we see it—or when others appear to be seeing it. Let us withhold censure from the London audience which sits agog through Marivaux's best marivaudage in a tense silence as of death, only to fall into huddles of rich, helpless laughter on hearing someone on the stage ask "*Quelle heure est-il?*" Have we not all made such mistakes? The record was made for us sinners all by little Marcel Proust whose confusion on being taken to see La Berma (Bernhardt) at the *matinée classique* is the last word in these delightful lessons in circumspection. Did you not yourself contribute to the roar which greeted Fallova on her first entry, only to find it wasn't Fallova at all but some quite unassuming second ballerina born aloft in pansy arms and off-white combies?—and after that when the great star did appear you were too cowed by your mistake to bring so much as two palms together.

Snobbery thus trapped by ignorance is an abiding delight. I hug a memory, which would make angels weep, of the poetry recital given by Eggnog, greatest of Scandinavian *diseuses* in the war. We followed—relishing—a line-by-line translation but a translation which had unaccountably missed a dozen poems out. There we were smiling with quiet delight at the rough humour of her folk section ("My mother warned me against the woodlands . . . ai, ai, ai") while all the time the monumental artist was prating loud of other matters, lonely



ROD DAVIS



"It's streets ahead of the Wolfenden Report."

birds at eventide and such. Nobody was any the wiser or sadder: whereas there was quite a perceptible awkwardness the other day at Sadler's Wells when half the audience stood stiffly through the best part of a Handel overture in the dutiful belief that it was the national hymn of the Ruritanian opera company on visit here.

But such little contretemps are trivial sums to pay for what I hold to be basically a generous attitude. So too the gently nostalgic snobberies of the *laudator temporis acti* whose murmur of "You should have seen So-and-So in it, my boy" can be heard like the tearing

of silk in the intervals of scenes. All innocence, the pink undergraduate rejoins: "I suppose you were at the first performance, sir?" which is followed by quite a perceptible pause while the old party remembers that the première was actually in 1851. Still, it was meant as deference; and how, unless each generation believes that what it saw in its young day was best imaginable, could legends ever grow? Let me have more of it.

As for one's neighbours, be they strangers, I am all in favour of establishing good relations. It is, I suspect, sheer English terror, not snobbery, which

induces two nice sensitive people to spend four hours pressed hip to hip watching and weeping at King Lear without so much as exchanging a glance. This does not happen in New York, where the lights are scarcely up again before your neighbour has dug you in the ribs and cried "My name's Roy Epstein—wadya think of the play? Great. Not that I approve of juve delinquency!" Democracy on the whole works happily in audiences and diminishes heartburnings of pride of place. The word is now "But I like it much better in the upper circle: you hear so well up there and don't see the



"Did you have to ask him that?"

horrid make-up." Snobbery can take the form of talking poor, and nature in her wisdom has provided for those who "actually prefer" back stalls to front.

But this reversal seems of more dubious value behind the scenes. Something has been diminished here—no mistake. Gone are the sacred monsters; the leading lady sweetly bitching up the works and condescending to the ingénue, the leading man's off-hand patronage of the young—all now are one in mateyness. "No side," no grandeur either. Better at golf or cooking (they would have us think) than acting, though art, etc., and the director and the motivation, they murmur, lowering their voices, these too are very, *very* important. "But we are just really like everyone else, old man."

Perhaps it had to come with the new type of play being written: plays positively reeking of snobbery turned inside out. Once it was assumed that our interest would be greater, not less, were the hero a man of sensibility and feeling, the heroine poor but well-born and bred. Though all the evidence points to the fact that it is much harder to write comically about a world where there is no punctilio to outrage, or tragically about a world where no one rises above the stature of the lowest common man, plays obstinately pride themselves on being about ordinary people who at best wash up at sinks, at

worst go shop-lifting and are tweaked from suicides' graves by a comic charwoman played by Kathleen Harrison.

As this sort of thing proves dull, even to the upper circle with its insatiable appetite for slices of life seen through rose-tinted glasses, recourse is had to the psychotic for the extra lift in it. Awful consequences follow; it comes to be assumed that plays about totally disorganized alcoholics, execrably acted by "teams of young people" in upholstered Sunday night sewers before audiences sitting in torment on orange boxes with their knees under their chins, are better than the "ordinary" plays alluded to.

Hence, too, that cynical "Make it hard for 'em, get 'em sleeping out" attitude on the part of managements, who with some amazement have learnt that if you want a really crowded concert hall the best way is to make us English stand, and that nothing succeeds like the play for which people have lain long nights on asphalt pavements. Is it not a kind of snobbery, this longing for self-martyrdom and suffering for the arts? No doubt, like walking to school, there is in it an element of wholesomeness; good, ultimately, for the arts themselves, for it is indifference which is the mortal enemy. Better a snob than a philistine.

And alas! it is just that consideration which makes snobs of us, the critics. Untroubled by the cash value of the

seats we occupy we give free rein to our "ought-to-be-liked" sentiments, and even where we have been acutely bored will often out of feigned love, that quintessential snobbery, adduce reasons why others should *not* be bored likewise. With the arrival of visitors from Moscow or east Berlin or even Paris, an emperor's clothes situation of gigantic proportions comes into effect and with what abasement and artistic masochism do we pronounce ourselves never before so moved, dazed or rapt—whereas the unpalatable truth is that the home product is often quite as good, though it would be sport-spoiling to say so. But every time—I echo Tinkerbell—a critic pumps up enthusiasms he does not feel, a genuine theatre-lover dies.

With such false attitudes goes the snobbery which repudiates "All but the best—if not for me, for my daughter!" A diet of masterworks is not a good diet, and few can stomach it without ultimate nausea. The taste too which rejects all but the immediately fashionable will surely die. The situation is now painfully obvious: we have a culture, miserably split into highbrow and lowbrow camps—indignation on the one hand, regretfully guilty indifference on the other; even the potentially healing telly a bone of contention.

Or is all this only the result of trying to deny snobbery its proper place? Assume a virtue if you have it not. All tastes are acquired; if one never pretended to enjoy what one actually did not enjoy would one ever learn to enjoy it? Perhaps all the theatre has to fear of snobbery is merely a fear of snobbery itself.

Just at the present time it would be hard indeed to think that a love of self-improvement or of theatre-going-for-the-wrong-reasons is likely to get wildly out of hand. So . . . "Take off that cap, please" . . . "Hush, this is the Old Vic, not the Penge Empire," and . . . but not yet . . . "Madam, do you realize that this is the *National* Theatre?" Also, one hopes, still up aloft, the morose goddess—"Load of bloomin' snobs!"

Other writers in this series will be:

SIRIOL HUGH-JONES
HENRY LONGHURST
STEPHEN POTTER
J. B. PRIESTLEY
GEORGE SCHWARTZ
FRANCIS WILLIAMS

Something Just Behind Us

By J. B. BOOTHROYD

HISTORY will commemorate 1958 as the year when so much didn't happen: the Coventry cathedral ballet, Sir Reginald Manningham-Buller's appointment as L.C.J., the death of *Time and Tide*, the flop of *My Fair Lady*. The Rapacki plan and Miss Bartok's wedding were other non-starters. No one got to the moon. The Queen didn't open the Ideal Home Exhibition. A man who thought he heard the first cuckoo didn't, because it turned out to be a clock in the next house, and *Sceptre* didn't win the America's Cup. U.N. observers failed to spot border infiltration, Nasser didn't back General Abboud, Lord Mancroft couldn't wait for his portfolio, mice didn't come back alive (though dogs did) and there was no Victory for Socialism. Other missing events included World War III and the Summit, though both looked promising at times.

Interspersed with the blanks were some occurrences. Mr. Bulganin went to Stavropol, Mrs. Castle to Cyprus, and the B.B.C.'s "Panorama" team to Paris, where they were locked in a cage by the police, who wished to continue rioting without benefit of cameras. In a Wolverhampton dance hall harsh chords were struck; in Notting Hill, Jamaicans. Princess Margaret was given a Canadian island, and a U.S. quiz almost gave away a Scottish one. Edible bus-tickets were suggested; then the litter-law went through and brought back edible confetti, or rice. In the realm of youth, sixth forms dissected kittens, two hundred pupils chased their master through the streets, pelting him. In the realm of pelting, Mr. Richard Nixon got beans in Colombia, fruit in Venezuela and bricks in Bogota, but remained man enough to praise the American way of life under a dentist's anaesthetic, and Mr. R. A. Butler got eggs in Scotland but kept any thoughts on the Scottish way of life to himself.

Public memory dimmed with the ageing year and, as it closed, Londoners queueing for axed buses forgot that this was their price for having none at all for nine weeks in the spring. Nor were murmured inquiries heard about what had happened to Laurie London, the

Baghdad Pact, chlorophyll, the European Free Trade Area, Robin Douglas-Home, the war with Iceland, Mr. and Mrs. Elwes, *Truth*, or Molotov and Shepilov—though some understood this last pair to be alternating the title role in *Uncle Vanya* during the Moscow Arts Theatre season at Sadler's Wells. Such gauzy hangovers from the summer as Alabaster and MacGibbon shimmered elusively. Had one of them been given a vicuna coat, or were they atomic submarines hell-bent for the Pole? Canvassed on whether Monte Carlo should be returned to the Dockers, 38 per cent said "Don't know."

In the field of sport the Russians rowed at Henley, though it was nothing to the row over Wardle at Lord's. Football was half-way through a good season at the year's end, with many big winners; all declared that the money would make no difference and they would carry on with their old jobs. Stag-hunters claimed that false scents had failed, which the League Against Cruel Sports thought cruelly unsporting. Cricket stopped play at Brisbane.

Life peers came in. Débutantes went out. Sputniks went round. Vanguard shot up. Knees came back. Nosecones dropped off. Quemoy blew over. Heuss passed through. H-marchers marched on. Ike's voice came down. Frank Sinatra was at his frankest with the Queen. Bank managers kept open house, and occasionally got shot for it.

The nation's health continued popular, and whole families at a time were hospitalized nightly by television doctors, either as Emergencies in Ward 10, sick minds probed at Lime Grove, or students sitting under actors with stethoscopes at the trail who explained that, as doctors, they could recommend the only possible adhesive for loose false teeth. Holes in the heart were the most favoured press operation of the year, and insomniac

readers sent themselves to sleep trying to remember whether blue babies had been 1957, iron lungs 1956 . . . and so on way back to the leisurely 'twenties, when sleeping sickness or psittacosis had been good for five years at a time. There was disturbing news about lung cancer: a suspected link with beer. Brewers, long observers of efforts by tobacco firms to persuade people to go on smoking who had never had any intention of leaving off, continued rolling out the barrels without comment.

The work of Parliament went on. Mr. Norman Dodds protested against the unhygienic practice of putting coins in Christmas puddings. Colonel Wigg spied strangers. Mr. Heathcoat Amory all but jolted us back into a First-class Power with his trade surplus of £334,000,000, but the effect wore off with reports that the latest U.S. loan to Chiang brought the total honorarium in that quarter to £2,000,000,000.

A motor-car in good condition was offered at 1s. 3d.

In the scientific sphere, Zeta warmed up to 30,000,000 degrees F., some compensation for a summer in which bathers turned mauve in the time it took to free their limbs of jellyfish and beach-tar. Two gifted Sussex children made a successful backyard bomb, dropping it from a bridge on to an





"Sarge, about that car without lights..."

engine-driver, and Welsh sheep were searched for Strontium 90. H-bombers flew overhead, while kiddies played beneath, secure in Government assurances that in case of a crash there was nothing to fear but a direct hit. The taming of the atom was further celebrated by an announcement that the Windscale reactors need only be sealed up for two hundred years, by which time they would be harmless.

It was a year of ill-assorted anniversaries: Elizabeth I, Cromwell, Karl Marx. It was a year of history made: Prince Charles created Prince of Wales, Prince Vittorio Massimo separated from Miss Dawn Addams; Dior at Blenheim, women in the Lords, Interpol at Caxton Hall. It was a year of improved *coup* status; when Nasser took over Egypt he

was a mere colonel, but in Syria, Irak, Lebanon, Pakistan, Burma, Siam, Sudan it was generals, generals all the way. It was, more than anything, a year of names. Names that vanished, like Mrs. Gerald Legge's; names that burst newly upon us, like Viscountess Lewis-ham's. Names easy to confuse—Rockefeller and Rothschild, Marples and Maudling. Names that wouldn't be spelt, like Sumitro Djojohadikusumo and Reykjavik; that couldn't be placed, like Wang-Ping-nan; that teased the memory, like the Greek shipowner who isn't Onassis; that we had frankly forgotten, like Pflimlin, Al-Amir Zeid ibn al-Hussein, Jacqueline Mackenzie, Alfred George Hinds; or weren't allowed to forget, like Bedford, Dors, Montgomery, Bergman.

Taking it all in all, it seemed a heavy year, though this must be blamed to some extent on the weight of the Sunday newspapers. Russia was active, banning Boris Pasternak and plastic hula-hoops virtually in the same breath. A planetarium arrived. Wasn't there some affair at Brussels? At Sotheby's? Spanish champagne turned into Dutch Scotch. De Gaulle cropped up in some connection. There were smoke signals over the Vatican, and a turbine exploded at Calder Hall. On the whole, looking at the maps and the headlines, watching "Double Your Money," talking to men on trains, noting the politicians' smiles and the bold talk of Service Chiefs, 1958 may perhaps be considered—like so many recent predecessors—as one more year of grace.

Lovely Fruit

By JO PACKER

"HEH, don't I know your sister?" I heard these words as I was pushing my bike through Birmingham Bullring. Two youths were standing there with expectant grins. One, ginger-haired, had a loose-fitting brown suit. The other wore a thigh-length American-style mac.

"How could you know her?" I said, "She lives in France. Perhaps you mean my friend Jean."

"Oh, yes, Jean—that's it, Jean," said the one in the mac. They came forward and immediately started to talk of other things. I was not genned-up at the time or I would have recognized the gambit as a method of getting acquainted. Later I learned, of course, that they had never set eyes on my sister or Jean.

The one in the mac seemed to have the jitters. He could not keep still. He rang my bicycle bell, spun the pedals round, got hold of the zip on my wind-cheater and whizzed it up and down, talking rapidly all the time. I watched him warily. His friend stood behind, backing him up and grinning broken-toothed like a gintrap.

In two minutes flat they had found out where I was going, where I lived, why I didn't have a Birmingham accent, and where I worked. They sprang like springboks to bag my next free pass when they heard I was a cinema cleaner. "All right," I said, "where shall I bring it?" "Here, the Bullring," they replied moving off. "You'll see us on the barriers."

That pleased me. Barrow-boys for friends meant free fruit and gratis greens. So I was not slow to take my free pass to the market place the following Monday. It was very crowded. I found Jumpy, as I had named him, holding sway behind a heap of cooking apples.

"Three pounds a shilling, lovely fruit these!" he yelled, breaking off to acknowledge the pass with a sotto voce "Tah, tah." During a gap in trade he fiddled with it and read the words but obviously did not absorb them, for the next day the cashier recounted how he had sailed into the cinema waving the pass to show that he was bona fide, at the same time slamming down money for friend Ginger. The cashier had rushed after him to explain that the pass

admitted two, whereupon his cries of surprise and approval filled the vestibule and the cash desk rocked as he retrieved his money.

I had not stood by his barrow twenty seconds before he was tangling with a housewife over the quality of the apples.

"They're a week old," she said, denting one deeply with her fingers. "These were on your barrow last Monday."

"Go somewhere else then," he retorted, but not, I noticed, denying the charge.

"I will then, and I'll fetch a policeman," she flashed back.

"Go fetch who you like," he shouted after her. There was nothing to worry about in the threat, so far as I could see, but a few seconds later Jumpy also departed, saying he was going to get his lunch. He left me to look after the barrow, turning the price-card face downwards so that the customers would realize that the apples were not for sale.

In spite of the collapsed price-card several women stopped, lifted it up, and then asked for three pounds of fruit. I weighed the apples nervously, for if the policeman came to reprimand Jumpy for his rudeness I might be roped in for lack of licence. Fortunately, Ginger strolled up and saved the situation. My relief only lasted a few minutes, for Ginger launched into an account of the intricacies of the licensing laws, and it appeared that the apple barrow was not licensed to appear on a Monday. This explained Jumpy's sudden burst of hunger.

A small boy, who spent his time looking up and down the street, was warned by Ginger to be specially on the alert for a peeler who generally patrolled the market at that hour. Soon the warning came. Ginger, jerked out of his usual phlegm by the prospect of yet another fine, sold apples until the last possible minute and then grabbed the barrow by the handles, rushing it across the Bullring to the safety

zone in the centre which appeared to have the properties of a rest square in hopscotch. Other barrow boys did the same in a mass movement resembling the retreat of Napoleon's artillery section from Moscow. Obviously more than one barrow had been delinquent.

I shifted my pitch when I saw Jumpy blithely selling peaches from another barrow farther down the line, a barrow which, Ginger assured me, was quite properly licensed for the selling of peaches on Mondays. Peaches draw me like bluebottles; Jumpy must have sensed this, for he graciously handed me a half-bad peach as soon as I arrived at his side. "Come again on Friday," he said, "we'll have bananas then."

I returned on Friday and found trade quieter. Jumpy had time to reveal his philosophy and ambitions. Ginger had neither. "If you want to get on in this life you've got to lie and cheat and steal," expounded Jumpy. I recognized the quotation from the recent film *Sweet Smell of Success*, but I did not reveal that I knew the source of his handy pocket-guide to living. I asked him, that being so, why he was still on the barrows. "I can't save me money," he explained, giving the phrase tragic undertones. "As soon as I get it I got to spend it. 'Specially on a Saturday because Saturday's top hat." Top hat, it seemed, is the day when the lucre is at its filthiest.

"I'd like to work in a shop," he said, "one that sells expensive greengroceries. Not this bish. Trouble is, in a shop you





don't know where you are. On this lark you can judge how much you earn in a week—ten, twelve or fifteen—by how hard you work. But in a shop it's reg'lar wages; you don't know where you are."

That seemed novel enough; another novel thing about him was that he claimed to know the *Ancient Mariner* all the way through, also *Gunga Din*, *The Listeners* and *The Highwayman*. I didn't risk disillusionment by asking for a recital, but looked at him critically and tested him out with a quotation: "You've got hair like mouldy hay."

"You're a cheeky bird," he answered, "I'm no groom." For once he was talking straight up.

The card on the barrow read 1/- A L.B. at a quick glance, but an examination under a microscope revealed $\frac{1}{2}$ in front of the L.B. When ladies handed him a shilling, after asking for a pound of the fruit, he pointed to the $\frac{1}{2}$ in such a manner that the customers felt their eyesight was gone and the almshouse was around the corner. Invariably they handed over the other shilling and went away reflecting on their stupidity.

I decided to arrange a foursome with Jean and the two barrow boys to visit the cinema where I cleaned. I needed another free pass which I obtained by bribing the young doorman for a whole week with all the boxes of chocolates and packets of sweets I found while cleaning. When the time came for him to honour his part of the contract he tried to argue that it was against the rules to transfer a free pass, and the promise of another week's findings had

to be thrown in to secure the coveted cardboard.

When the night came I regretted my enthusiasm, for the boys, sitting on the back row, brought preliminary frowns to the usherettes' faces before the performance started. First they took their jackets off, complaining of the heat. When we appeared they called loudly to us. During the show they spent several minutes noisily inspecting the tubs, choc ices and iced lollies on the ice-cream girl's tray before pillaging it. Just as the big film was starting they decided to move forward several rows on the pretext that the view from the back seats wasn't too good. Finally, half-way through the performance, they got up and pushed their way out, using other people's feet as stepping stones,

and announcing en route that they would be back soon.

The film was in its last reel when they returned. "We've had a smashing game of darts," they said. "You shoulda come!" I told them tartly that their pub-crawling had caused them to miss the best part of the picture. "Don't matter," said Jumpy, "we saw it when we was in Blackpool, anyway."

That experience was sufficient for the time being. We didn't meet them again until the day we were going to France. As we passed through the Bullring on our way to the station we stopped and had a few words. Jumpy warned us that Paris was a dodgy pitch, but could not elaborate the statement. I looked back before crossing over the road. Ginger was on the peach barrow carefully turning the peaches bad side downwards. Jumpy was selling the same old green apples. He had four crates on top of the barrow, and six stashed away underneath, ready for refilling.

"Lovely fruit, ladies," he was shouting. "Only a few left."

Tatzelwurms and Pterodactyls

By H. F. ELLIS

SOME men are born sceptical, others become scientists and have scepticism thrust upon them. Nothing can be done for either category. They move sadly about their business, incredulous of marvels, dismissing the unknown as impossible and the inexplicable as untrue. The limits of the feasible are known to them, and there is nothing left remarkable beneath the visiting moon. If statues dripped blood in their presence or shields appeared incontrovertibly in the sky—common enough occurrences in Roman times, though not much noted since—they would shrug the phenomena aside with a calm "No doubt there is some quite simple explanation." They disbelieve, to a man, in the Tatzelwurm.

Dr. Bernard Heuvelmans is a different proposition altogether. Though a scientist he retains an open mind. He is the only man, so far as I know, who has received a Doctorate of Zoology at Brussels for a thesis on the dentition of the aardvark and simultaneously (more or less) won first prize for small bands

at an International Congress of Amateur Jazz. The breadth of interest here revealed may explain the Doctor's freedom from that niggling unbelief, that insistence on positive proof that makes most scientists so smug and unendurable. He *wants* to believe in marvels. If an explorer returns from Brazil with a story of an anaconda sixty-two feet long, Dr. Heuvelmans does not automatically dismiss the man as a liar. His attitude, it would be fair to say, is that what little evidence exists about sixty-two-foot anacondas is all in favour; here, after all, is a man who has just seen one. The evidence against, which consists of statements from innumerable people who have had the ill-luck never to have seen one over thirty feet, is effectively nil. Nor is it to the claims of white explorers only that Dr. Heuvelmans is prepared, in the absence of definite proof to the contrary, to extend a cautious credence. If the natives of the lower Ubangi in the Cameroons say (as they do) that there is an amphibious brownish-grey creature



in those parts, about the size of an elephant but with a long flexible neck and only one tooth, why should they not be right? They know the ordinary fauna of the district well enough not to make elementary mistakes. What is more, the superstitious tales of "primitive" natives have turned out to be soundly based often enough in the past, despite the repeated pooh-poohings of chairborne zoologists. What about the okapi, Dr. Heuvelmans asks, or the pygmy hippopotamus, the gerenuk, the dibatag, the grey ox of Cambodia, the giant panda or the Komodo dragon?

Dr. Heuvelmans, it should be unnecessary to add, has little doubt that the Tatzelwurm exists.

All this is extremely satisfactory, and anybody with an open mind and a taste for the bizarre should hurry to read the Doctor's admirable *On the Track of Unknown Animals*,* in which (not without copious illustrations) he sets about the sceptics, the stick-in-the-muds and the unbelievers. Here, just to whet the appetite, are half a

*Rupert Hart-Davis, 35/-

dozen creatures that Dr. Heuvelmans thinks may well be alive and kicking in odd corners of the world at this moment.

The Moa. Large wingless New Zealand bird, generally supposed by spoilsports to have been extinct since the eighteenth century.

The Mammoth. Best place to look for this is in the vast Siberian forest known as the "taiga." Two specimens seen in 1918 by a Russian hunter—also footprints two foot wide by one foot six long. (Name of Russian not known, but he had a brother who worked at the Russian Asiatic Bank in Vladivostok in 1920, if anyone cares to follow the matter up.)

The Mngwa. A man-eating carnivore found only along the coast of Tanganyika. Rather like a leopard, but as big as a donkey and striped with grey like a tabby-cat. Not to be confused with the *Ndalawo* of Uganda, also unknown to science, and certainly not with the Nandi bear, which Dr. Heuvelmans thinks may turn out to be a non-extinct *Chalicotherium*. Tears native constables to pieces.

The Lau, Lukwata, Dingonek, Chip-ekwe, Nze-fu-loi, Mourou-ngou, Isiqu-madevu, or Mokéle-mbémbe. This creature badly needs sorting out. They may not all be the same animal. Those that are may be some kind of dinosaur. Or a *Dinotherium*. Well worth searching for in either case. Try the swampy areas of the Congo basin—but watch your step. These creatures can, and do, lacerate hippopotami.

The Pterodactyl. Northern Rhodesia. Photographed recently by one of the crowd of zoologists, game wardens, newspaper correspondents, ornithologists, etc., who gathered to watch the waters rising above the Kariba Dam, and turned out to be some kind of stork. This is typical of the sort of thing Dr. Heuvelmans is up against. What turned out to be some kind of stork was, of course, some kind of stork. The Pterodactyl has not yet been photographed. When it is, it will turn out to be some kind of pterodactyl.

The Minhocão. A slithery, burrowing kind of creature from Paraguay. Leaves a grooved track from five to ten feet

wide, but in general prefers to move underground and is capable of overturning pine trees. Was active in the 1860s and 1880s but does not seem to have been above ground much since. Dr. Heuvelmans thinks it may be a Glyptodon, though, as he cautiously observes, "more evidence is needed."

I defy anyone—bar those tedious scientists who can credit nothing until it is delivered to them in a cage—not to be enlivened by the possibility that any, or all, of these six interesting creatures may at this very instant be

roaming the taiga forests, laying their enormous eggs in New Zealand, burrowing or flapping or mutilating constables or hippopotami, each according to his kind. One can hardly hope, perhaps, to come across them in person; the Congo basin and the swamps of Upper Paraguay are beyond the reach of most of us. But there are other, scarcely less remarkable animals closer at hand. The Tatzelwurm, for instance, about which the reader's curiosity should by now be approaching a peak, lives in Switzerland.

Eat-Sin

By CLAUD COCKBURN

CHANCING lately to encounter Murrell, the thinker, I said to him "Murrell," I said, "when it's all over with sex, booze, and the fix, what do you suppose is going to happen?"

Nonplussed, despite his sobriquet, he looked as vacant as a hot tin roof with no cat on it yet. I animadverted in that sense. Aware of my shocked disillusion at sight of thinker caught *en déshabille* by major topical issue he parried.

"Looking ahead a good bit, aren't you?" was his query, his manner quizzical.

"Things," I riposted, "are moving along at a pretty fast clip. Dr. Fitch,

e.g., says that in the U.S.A sex is noticeably on the wane."

"?"

"Dr. Robert Elliot Fitch, Dean of the Pacific School of Religion in Berkeley, California. His book, widely reviewed, is entitled *The Decline and Fall of Sex*, and he seems to mean what that says. He is quoted as stating that we have about reached the point where 'sex loses its sex appeal.'"

"An isolated defeatist?" hazarded Murrell. But something of the old glib assurance was lacking. I let him have it straight. It was the kindest way.

"Face it," I snapped. "What did you ever do for sex, or the old dionysiac frenzy, that Sophocles hadn't done

already, not to mention the Swan of Avon, with full marks for audience participation? There's been too much take and no give, it seems to me. Note, too, for your files, sharp decline in circulation of *News of the World*. Rape's had it. That's the certain suggestion I want to make. The whole shebang's coming apart at the seams."

His face was a study, and there was I, studying it.

"Might I just interpolate a little something?" The plea was voiced by a stranger, total as they come, who had just entered the saloon bar, well-stocked library, railway carriage, or wherever else we happened to be. A glance, and I kept it cursory, told me this man had a contribution to make. I found myself hoping, with mounting excitement, that there was more in him than met the eye.

"I don't know"—and beneath his diffidence I sensed assurance doubly sure—"whether either of you have ever given much thought, *real* thought, I mean, not this modern trash you get, to the Watussi tribe of Africa? The name, by the way, is Smiethe."

"You mean," smiled Murrell, "the dominant race-group of the Ruanda-Urundi region, on the eastern border of the Belgian Congo? They are remarkable for, *inter alia*, their quite exceptional height, not a few of them being over eight foot tall; the mere six-footer is deemed stunted."

"True enough," assented Smiethe, in a tone which seemed subtly to discount Murrell's expertise. "But there are other aspects possibly more pertinent, more germane, if you will, to our theme. Care to read all abait it?"

"?!"

"?!?!"

The brochure, or pamphlet, now handed to us by Smiethe was entitled *Eat-Sin: A Study of Gastronomic Tabu in Ruanda-Urundi*. Its cover was decorated with a line drawing which was obscurely revolting.

Seeking, I opine, to recover a long-lost initiative, Murrell did business with his reading glasses, assuming the dubious sagacity of a Select Commission.

"Cheap at half the price, I shouldn't wonder," he hummed. He pointed to the words "Price Five Shillings," printed just below the far from nice design. I was taken aback by a figure



so manifestly stiffish. "... was all I could achieve by way of comment.

"Fair enough." (Smiethe's colloquialisms were odious.) "I suggest that in the circs you each pay just two and a kick, and for that sum enjoy the use of the one copy between the two of you. Shared pleasures, you know, etc., etc. Savvy?"

I am not one of those who are wont to quote Lenin, the controversial Russian, as though nothing very serious had happened since. Now, however, I did feel justified in observing that "Freedom is the recognition of necessity" as I fell to a perusal of the opusculc which, as future occasion arises, I propose to refer to as The Smiethe Brochure.

"Opsimathy has its charms," assented Murrell, as (albeit conscious of other-directedness) we bent to the task.

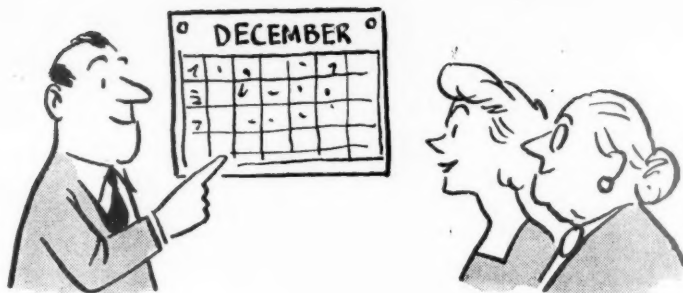
"This," I exclaimed, "is a bit of an eye-opener," and "You can say that again for me, with knobs on" was Murrell's characteristically enthusiastic rejoinder.

There was a certain amount of old rope of course in the way of familiar stuff about how the Watussi (in common, I believe, with many other peoples) regard eating as a function that should be performed in strictest privacy, and are disgusted and incensed by any suggestion that nourishment be taken publicly.

But Smiethe had delved deep, and come up with news of a sub-section of Ruandi-Urundi inhabitants—dwelling, so far as could be judged from a hardly adequate map, just south of the hyphen—where what he termed the "eat-sin tabus" had been immeasurably developed and refined. Not only had eating *per se* become sinful (though regrettably essential to the prolongation of life), it had become the only sin, the only act which qualified, so to say, as a genuine vice.

Though "eat-crazed" was the popular term, Greek scholars among the tribesmen preferred the word "phagomania" as descriptive of the vice, and no dipsomaniac in our society ever incurred more obloquy than the phagomaniac among the Watussi. ("Please sell no more food to my father" is a rough translation of a well-known Watussi folksong.)

There were those who claimed that only *excessive* indulgence in eating



must be regarded as sinful. They even sought to detract from popular horror of the vice by trying to rationalize the situation—suggesting that "over"-eating was only "bad" in so far as it implied unwholesome or dangerous obesity.

Such notions—variously described by the right-thinking as "heresies," "deviations," and "dangerous thoughts"—were rigorously suppressed. "Half a

loaf is no better than a beano" was the slogan.

With social and moral tensions crackling and snapping round the eat-issue, or "incidence of nourishment occurrence," literature and the arts received, in Smiethe's deplorable phrase, "quite a shot in the arm."

Many people, it is true, refused to read books or view dramatic performances in which the eat-urge and its

satisfaction was in any way central to the theme and the motivation of characters. "There's so much eating in real life," such people said, "we don't want to find it in our reading too."

Yet there was no denying the appeal of a certain "eaty" type of literature. On the stage, references to restaurants, cooks and even, in one or two instances *real recipes*, which at one time would have got the play immediately banned, became common, and authors were applauded in certain quarters for their "frankness." One author went to the length of laying a scene actually *in* a restaurant. This piece, however, was licensed to be seen by Club members only.

Words commonly barred from polite conversation began to appear in scarcely disguised form in tales allegedly "realistic."

"Ch—w off, you ind—st-ble old g—rm-t, you" was a comparatively mild example of the linguistic coarseness which now seemed to delight a large section of the public.

There was no doubt that "Eat-Sin" provided an element of interest and excitement in the life of a community weary of fertility rites and the intoxicant kola bean.

"You know, they have something there," mused Murrell, broodingly.

"I think . . ."

A look of what I can only describe as lubricious excitement was in his eye.

"Waiter," he cried to a passing attendant, "can I get a cheese sandwich?"

Ballade of Good Intentions

THE gale assaults my window, gust on gust,
In kitchen bleak the tea is mine to make,
My razor-blade was old and harsh with rust,
I've got my tightest shirt on by mistake.
My family, unwilling to awake,
Swore that they had not slept when they awoke,
Where is my other shoe, for pity's sake?—
This is the day I wasn't going to smoke.

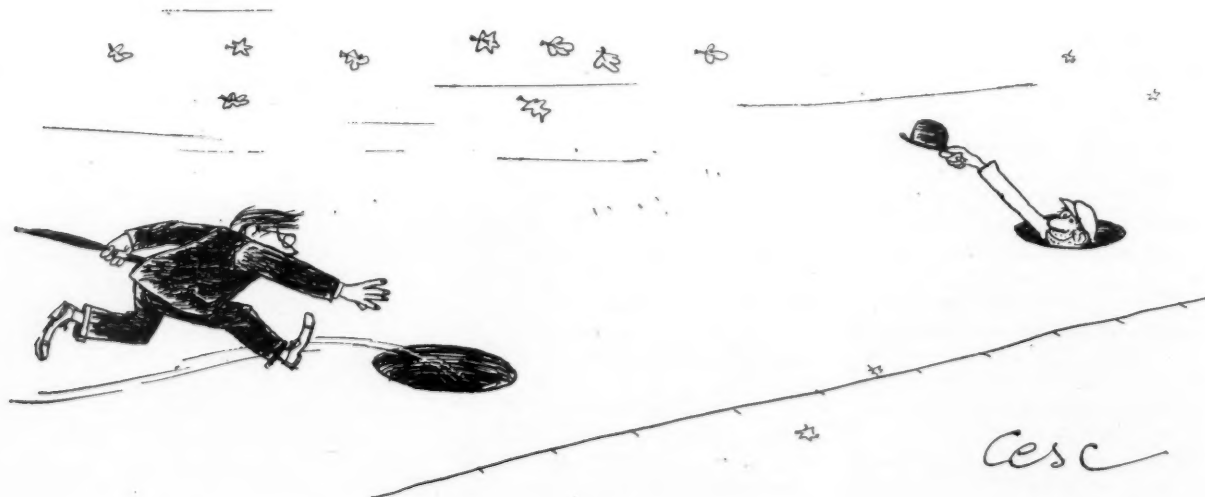
The headlines hum with radioactive dust,
The train affects a nagging sideways shake,
Two bores bounce in, loquacious, red, robust,
I throw a glaring hint they fail to take;
My bolted breakfast gives a vocal quake,
And one bore, smirking, asks me if I spoke,
I have to lunch with Crawshaw's Cattle-Cake—
This is the day I wasn't going to smoke.

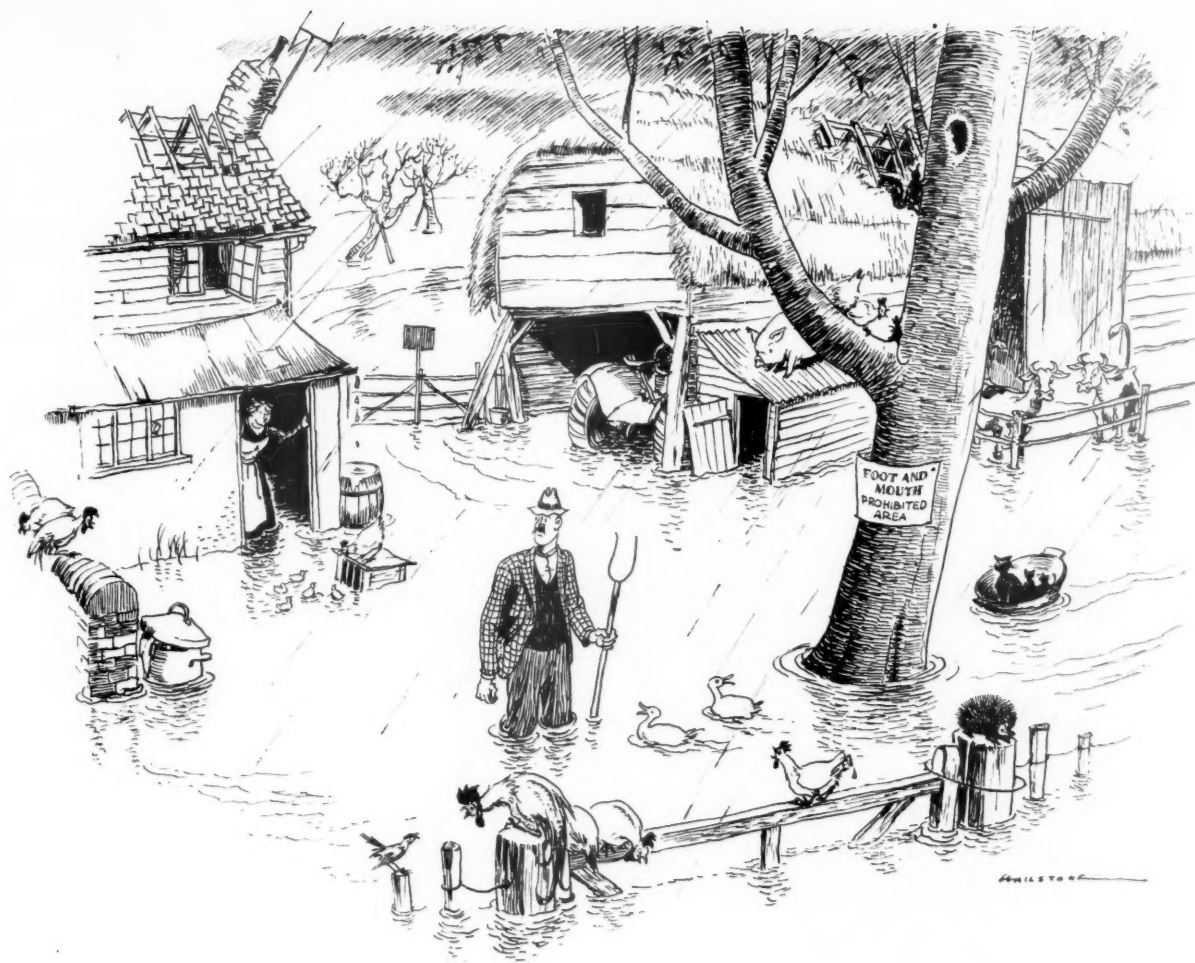
The office lift would choose to-day to bust,
My calves and shins and feet and ankles ache,
A hundred tasks await me, each a must,
Miss Jackson joins me in the coffee-break . . .
The resolution seemed a piece of cake,
A simple loosing of a foolish yoke,
So easy (late last night) to undertake—
This is the day I wasn't going to smoke.

Envoi

Prince, even saints at some time must forsake
Their solemn vows, their lofty oaths revoke:
Martyr'd like me, they pondered at the stake—
"This is the day I wasn't going to smoke."

J. B. BOOTHROYD





"Ask yourself—what would Dan Archer do?"

New Writers Begin Here

By LESLIE MARSH

EXPERIENCED NOVELIST REQUIRED to revive half-finished manuscript.—Write Box K. 1145. The Times, E.C.4.

IT was the plot that had got stuck; the character work was coming along nicely. You had this public relations officer for marihuana cigarettes in and out of love with this dipsonympho; neither of them could get properly integrated because they had to keep moving from one dust-bin to another; the conversation was surly and snarling and everything was as socially significant and aware as it could be, nothing old hat or starry-eyed about it, and bags of anger. Then a few interfering busybodies to whom I had shown

the first forty thousand words suggested that something ought to happen now and then to break up the dialogue and descriptive, and it was to satisfy them as much as anything (some of them claimed to have given me an advance) that I put this advertisement in the paper top novelists read, but I was disappointed with the results.

There was this Priestley offering his services for a start. His idea was to bring all the dope peddlers and call-girls together into a skiffle group that eventually got a date at the Palladium, but owing to jealousy and other sub-plot complications the members of a crooner's

fan club started a rough-house and wrecked the theatre, so all the skiffers went home to Somerset and elsewhere and led healthier lives, some even getting married.

I said "This won't do, Jack. It's very old boots, practically elastic-sided. Be your atomic age. I'm not talking about selling first serial rights to a magazine, you know."

He didn't like this, said I hadn't thought the thing through at all, and went off in high dudgeon and broad Yorkshire.

Then Kingsley Amis had a go. He thought that more of my characters

should spend more time drinking more beer and talking about it more. This, he insisted, would add considerable gaiety and create just the "reviving" element I wanted. I told him flat I was not in this game for the brewing interests, the people in my book were more likely to go for vodka, there wasn't the beer brewed in our island home to make them gay, and who was talking about gaiety anyhow?—my tentative title was *Rancid Harvest*, not *Phil the Fluter's Ball* or *Happy-go-Lucky*. He retorted that he'd better be going, he didn't like it here.

By now I was getting a fair number of applications so I arranged the next day's interviews at half-hourly intervals to save time. But, as doctors and dentists find, one consultation may take a few minutes more than expected and the delay piles up as the day goes on. I noticed when I went into the waiting-room about half-past eleven that Howard Spring was getting fidgety and the next time I went in he'd gone. Hoity-toity.

Mind you, I didn't see them all; some of the offers I dealt with by post. There was Nancy Mitford, for instance; she went on and on and on about Hons., and I told her fairly straight that I didn't go on that class-conscious rubbish; my people, if they used a handle at all, would call themselves *The Con.*, for *Contemporary*. The same with the executors of James Hilton who tried to flog me second rights in the title

Good-bye, Mr. Chips—they thought my hero could be called Chips because he had so many on his shoulder.

I didn't care at all for the tactics of one correspondent, an old trouser by the sound of him, who wrote in what he called a "connecting link" at the end of my manuscript to introduce the second half of the book which was to be all his: "A strange malaise which has hung heavy upon me in these last few months, drugging my brain like poppy and mandragora, is, I believe, loosening its grip. Henceforth, I hope, nay, confidently expect, I shall be able to think more clearly and convey to you, gentle reader, a sharper outline of the scenes through which our hero is yet destined to pass e'er the benison of triumph over temptation descends upon him." I sent that one back with a rejection slip.

One very busy morning, to speed things up, I called in the candidates two at a time. Graham Greene and Agatha Christie were the first pair. Greene kept fussing about Sin. "Well, haven't you even read my stuff?" I asked rather shortly. "There's a very fair sprinkling. Pages 7-39, living on the earnings; 41-53, hashish-running; 62-87, grievous bodily harm; 91-124, most of the indictable sex offences, and then there's that bit about—" "Yes, yes, I know," he interrupted, "I wasn't thinking so much about sin with a small s as Sin." "And no body," chimed in Miss Christie. "You can't run to over a hundred pages

without mentioning the body." "I haven't, far from it," I reminded her. "The body comes in for a good deal of reasonably detailed description; torsoes, madam, not corpses."

Suddenly I saw the uselessness of this whole approach. They were all trying to sell me their gimmicks; the book would be *them*, not *me*. If we went on like this it would never be my novel. *My Novel*. That rang a bell. Not Lytton, nobody reads him now, but one of the genuine old-timers, they'd be the experienced novelists to revive my half-finished manuscript, and for free. Someone like Trollope, whose sales had gone walloping up ever since he was a Sunday evening broadcast serial, or Scott, or Dickens. Hurriedly I bundled Miss Christie and Mr. Greene out. "I'll be writing to you," I called over my shoulder on my way back to the clinic to dismiss the rest: "Some other day perhaps; sorry I can't fit you in to-day."

Dickens, yes, that was the ticket. He'd been a very hot Sunday evening radio number. As soon as the house was clear of all these intruders who clog creative thought I got straight back to the desk and started work. This is a rough draft of how it will open now:

"It was the snuggest, cosiest, warmest, cheeriest, compactest, tiniest tenement you ever saw. Scorning the garish opulence of the gas chandelier or the chaste carving of the oil lantern, the occupier, no stranger, by his countenance, to carking care and grinding poverty, yet never one to wilt under these combined assaults of cruel fate, had manfully contrived to illumine his humble home by the glow of a candle deftly impaled upon an inverted cube, box, chest or container fashioned from tin, and who shall say that the mellow, soft suffused beam that shone upon his little world did not furnish forth a more sterling, honest radiance than ever poured upon a gilded aristocrat's luxurious chambers or a curled and pampered tyrant's banquetting hall?"

Then straight in to the seduction scene.

☆

"It was near closing time when a man walked into the shop in Old Hall Street, Hanley, produced what appeared to be a fireman and told the two women assistants 'I want £5.'"—*News Chronicle*

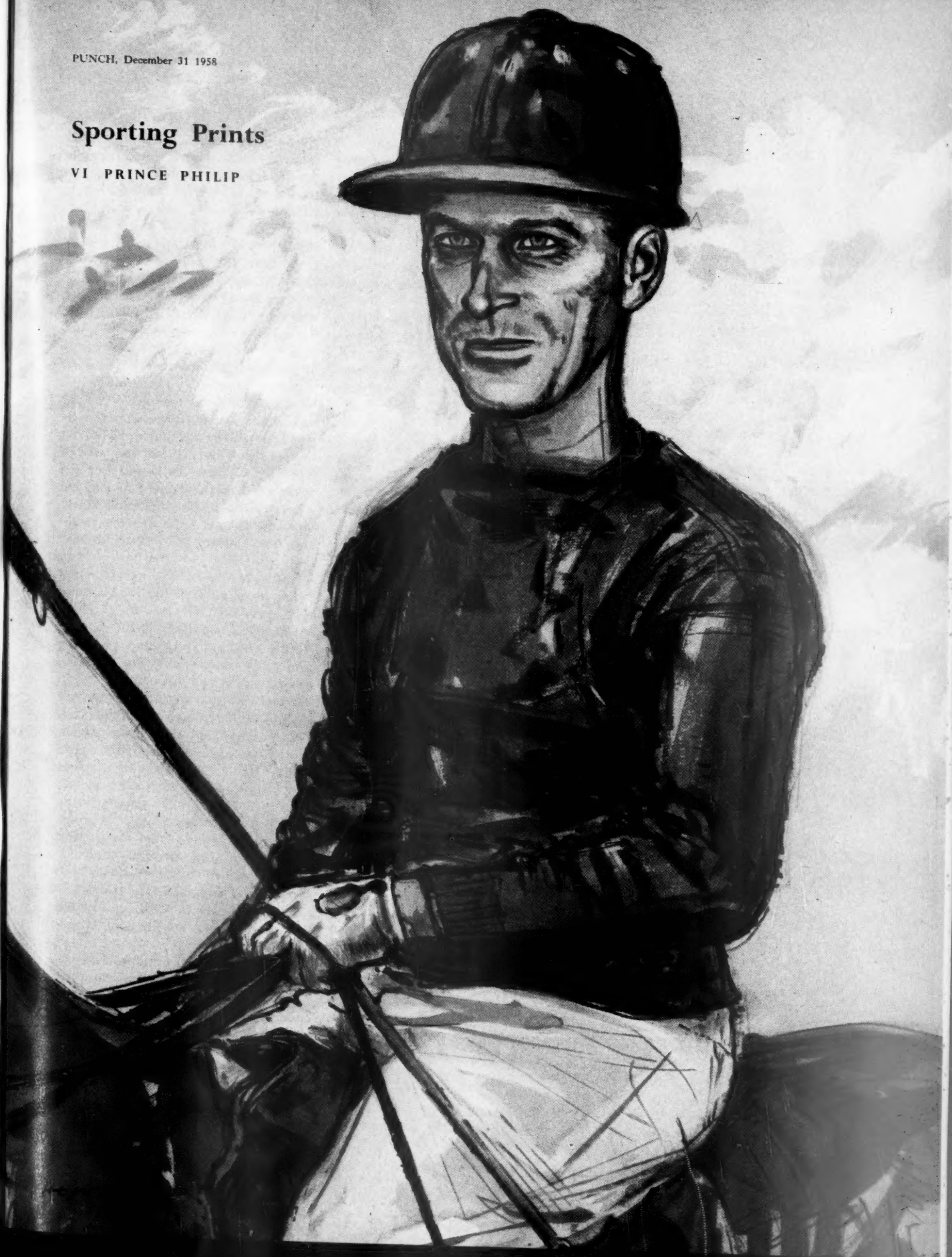
Snip, we'd say.



PUNCH, December 31 1958

Sporting Prints

VI PRINCE PHILIP



My First Elephant

By DARRELL BATES

WHEN I first went out to Africa I used to listen with great respect to other people's stories of their first elephant. If I shut my eyes I can still see the long, curved bar at the Dar-es-Salaam Club, the shadows of the fans playing mercilessly on the damp, glistening bald heads of the older members, and I can still hear the stories that always ended "And down he went, old boy, like a bloody battle-ship."

I was posted later to a district which was very much up country—"Out of the pink into the blue," as someone said as he drank his third gin-and-bitters and slapped me on the back.

I arrived in a lorry. There was a small village and up above it were half a dozen hills. Some of these had been cleared of the thick forest to make way for the forces of law and order. On one was the office and the flagstaff. On another was the District Commissioner's house. Farther away were the police lines, which looked across to another hill, on which, with a nice sense of fitness, the prisoners were building a new prison. On one of the hills was my house. Surrounding us was the forest, creeping back again wherever it got the chance.

One night I was woken up by my factotum, Ali. He came in wearing an



"Nero, my boy, you'll thank me some day for making you practise."

apprehensive expression and holding up a hurricane lamp. I looked at my watch. It was half-past two. He said that there was a crowd of people outside who wanted to see me on a most urgent and important matter.

"Must I go?" I asked.

"You must, sir."

"What do they want to see me about?"

"An elephant, sir."

Outside, in the dark and the drizzle, were about a dozen people. One of them who, in the daytime, typed my letters with three agile fingers and one enormous thumb, explained.

"In the valley below our huts are our gardens, our maize, our potatoes, our beans—our very life. An elephant is there eating and trampling. We have banged drums and our women have made horrible noises but he takes no notice. He goes on eating and trampling. Unless you shoot him all will be destroyed. Our wives will cry and our children will die of hunger."

Well, I thought, this is it.

"Relieve yourselves," I said.

I had slightly misposed a Swahili vowel but, understanding, they just waited.

Inside my room, I thought desperately of a way out as I put on a very dark blue fisherman's jersey and a very dark pair of trousers. Inevitably, there was no way out. The only rifle I had was a very old Mannlicher I had bought for £5. But to impress I took my shotgun as well and a handful of number 3 cartridges. As I appeared, armed to the teeth, there was an appreciative intake of breath.

"Let us go," I said, finding the right word this time, but not quite the confident ring.

As we walked in single file down my hill and up through the thick forest to the next, I wondered what on earth I was going to do. There was no moon and no stars. It was so dark I could barely see the man in front of me. We seemed to walk for miles.

At last the file stopped. One man whispered "Listen." I listened. I could hear nothing but the cicadas and the pumping of my heart. "Look," he said. I could see absolutely nothing. After a bit the man said again "Listen."

This time I thought I could just hear dimly a munch-munch sound, away to the left. The faint sound grew inside me till it sounded like an elephant eating buns at the zoo.

I whispered "You all wait here." I handed my rifle to Ali and took the shotgun. With unsteady hands, mercifully unseen in the darkness, I loaded it.

"Wait here," I whispered again. But now I spoke with decision. I had a plan.

I moved off to the left until I was sure that not even the cat's eyes of my supporters could see me. I waited—purely for effect. Then, lifting the shotgun until it pointed high in the sky and behind me, to be quite, quite sure that there was no possibility of irritating the elephant in his softest parts, I loosed off first one barrel and then the other. When the noise had stopped echoing away up into the mountains I listened. I could sense that everybody else was listening too, I could hear nothing at all.

Suddenly one of the men shouted "He's hit him! He's hit him! Listen. He's going!"

I joined them quickly, just in case the elephant was going my way. Another man said "He's gone! The elephant has gone."

I saw that standing next to me was a tall, gaunt, figure wrapped in a blanket. He was one of my messengers, a man who always looked sad and who spoke rarely. He laid a hand on my arm and said with finality "He has gone. I know it. I heard his ears flapping as he went." And I believed him.

As we returned, all the women and the children came running after us. "He has killed the elephant!" they chanted and whinnied. In triumph I was escorted back to my house. I bade them good-night. To Ali I said "Bring the whisky."

Next morning Ali came in with the tea as usual at half-past six. As usual he put out my slippers and laid my clothes over a chair. As I sipped my tea he said "Sir."

"What?" I asked.

"About that elephant."

"Yes," I said.

"They have seen the marks. It was a bush pig. But," he added, "sir, it was a very, very big bush pig."

Notes from the Provinces

By MALCOLM BRADBURY

NOW that the provinces are quite respectable, literary-wise, and all the reputable publishers are sending their prodigies up for a three-month stint in Nottingham and The Town I Mustn't Name (people have just stopped calling it Stoke round our way), it seems an apt time to toss out a memoir or two of those past gilded years when, feckless, handsome, rakish, a gay *flâneur* tossing a mop of wine-dark hair, I trod the boulevards of Nottingham, a key figure in that city's intellectual renaissance.

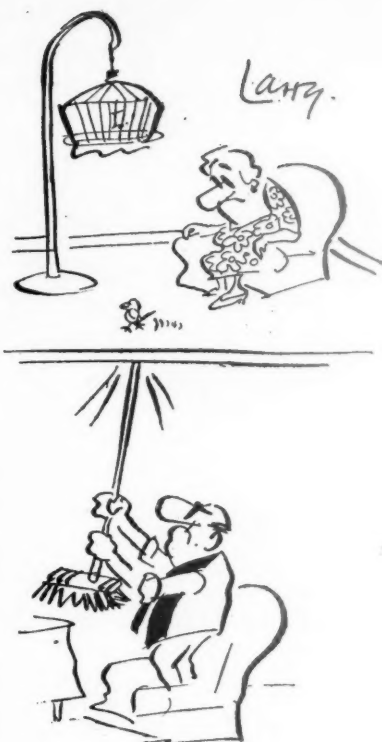
These were the palmy days after the war (the bit that Cyril Connolly called "closing time in the gardens of the west") and what I want you all to know was that there was just as much despair, and of just as good a quality, in Nottingham as there was anywhere else. Even at that time Nottingham was in touch; there was a constant to-and-fro between it and Soho, and when Dylan Thomas got his finger stuck in yet another bottle we heard about it just as soon as you boys down there. This time constituted a period in itself, the period when people could get grants just for *being like that* and everyone wore leather patches on the elbows of *perfectly new* Harris tweed sports jackets. Nottingham was full of Jewish refugees called Giselda, who wore black stockings and played the harp. It was a kind of provincial Vienna, though rather short on opera and *gemütlichkeit*. The Council House, an imposing edifice designed by Sir Christopher Wren, and built in about 1927, adds something distinguished to the town, especially when visiting Mohammedans, mistaking its purpose, go and pray in the shopping arcade.

At this time I worked in a commercial art studio, from time to time, in an atmosphere of cautious abandon; that is, we would have liked to have been abandoned, but this was England, and the Midlands, and one could hardly . . . One of the artists, a tall gaunt figure who always carried a bottle of milk in his pocket (on one occasion, on the top deck of a bus, the cap fell off and milk flowed down the aisle and down the stairs. "What's going on up there?"

shouted the conductor), was constantly meeting people who told him, because he asked them, how to make money. He grew mushrooms in old pairs of shoes. He gave music lessons. Being, however, essentially good-hearted he had not the power to tell his poorer pupils that never, in a month of Sundays, would they make good musicians; when they came he would hide in an alcove behind the front door, and they would circulate the house, peering in through all the windows, until at last they would go fuming away. The most delightful thing that ever happened to him (for our purposes) was that one evening a man came to his door (he lived in an ordinary house in the heart of an ordinary suburb) with two horses and asked if this was a stud-farm.

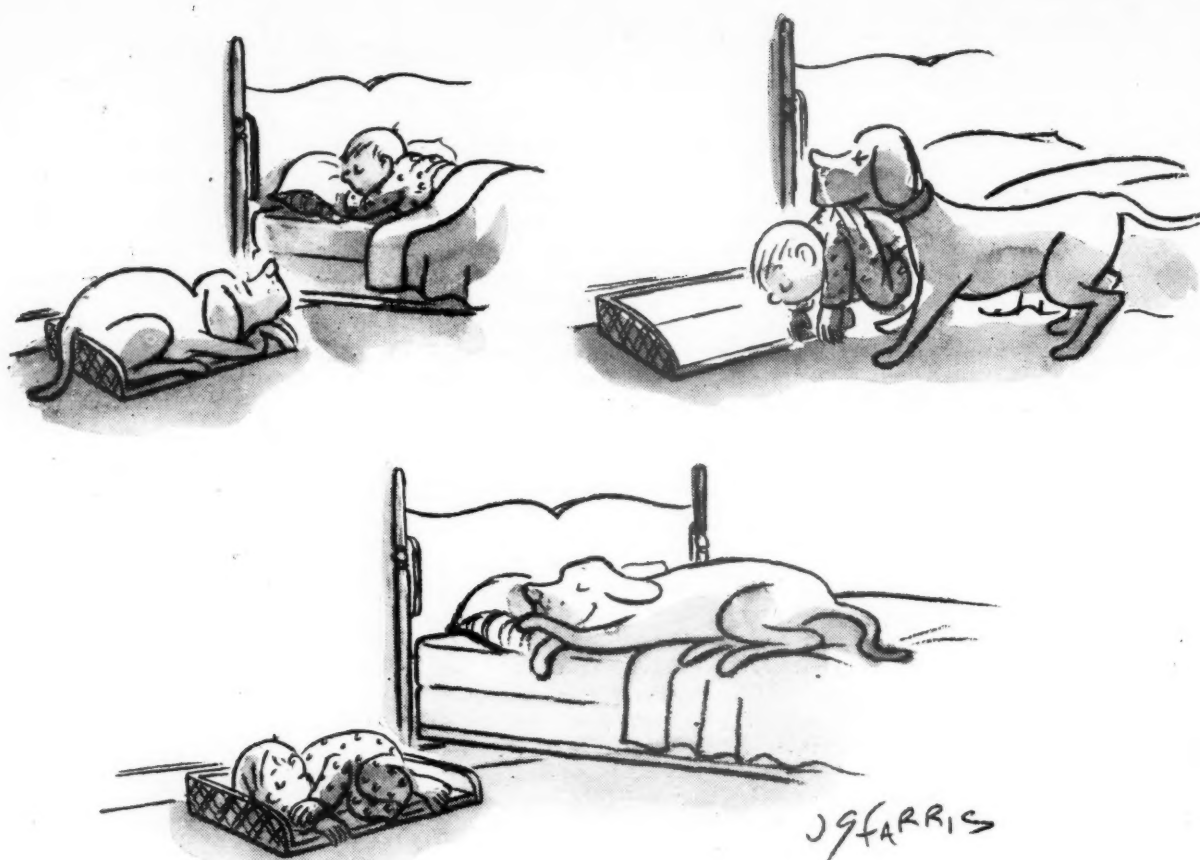
All the artists tried to think of ways of making money. For instance, we all drew cartoons and sent them off to *Punch*, which inexplicably returned them; the cartoons all had strange captions that were juicy with subtlety and social significance, and I have one here, characteristic of the period, which shows a married couple of middle age sitting somnolently in front of the fire with the wife saying "I suppose I do look different. I've been run over."

One of our curious discoveries was that in the milk bars of the city there were young men of the same age as ourselves and of much the same disposition who simply did not work. They slept on the pipes in the public library. They were writing pornographic novels in ten volumes that were to be published (in English) in Italy and smuggled back in women's corsets. They read Nietzsche (but then, who didn't?) and cadged drinks in the milk bars. They kept diaries about their phallic selves and every entry began: "The agony continues—unabated." One of them actually lived in a cave under Nottingham Castle. "Are you normal?" they used to ask people, meaning sexually, but of course what was normal to them was abnormal to other people. If they went to bed, to sleep that is, before four in the morning you knew they were really ill. Like us they were all looking for ways of making



money, a curious bourgeois streak; all saw themselves as potential entrepreneurs, building up great business empires and smoking cigars. One man had an idea for selling tinned beans—with this "twist" (as he called it), that the lid, when wiped clean of tomato sauce, would prove to be a small gramophone record which would pulse forth popular ballads at 45 r.p.m. Another man had the idea for building optical prescriptions into the wind-screens of cars for women snobs. Someone else was called Colin Wilson. I always called them the sugar beet generation, because the only work they did was to work in the sugar beet factory at harvest time. By this they made enough to live on for the rest of the year while they created—havo mostly. Of course they lived on other people's sofas and never spent anything.

It was when the Espresso bars started that the rot set in; it meant that anyone could be like us. It was terrible. The Espressos filled a previously unexpressed social need, to judge from the fact that it drew, from seemingly respectable homes in the suburbs, persons such as had never been seen out before. There



were *louche*, beduuffed youths, looking like Marlon Brando and carrying double basses; and damsels with black eyeshadow, stark-white faces, and legs longer than any we had had in Nottingham before. It was all a part of the new continentalism. Characteristically in the van of social changes, I was to be seen each evening supping the frothy ambrosia and peering inquisitively through the fronds at the low necklines of the debby waitresses. They were waitresses such as even cosmopolitan Nottingham had never seen. Delectable and slinkily attired they were actresses "resting," as they put it, or "freelancing." Though they forgot their orders and spent most of their time saying "Daddy was absolutely *livid*" to one another and having their bottoms pinched in dark corners by the more favoured regulars; to be short-changed by one of these geishas was an emotional experience.

In this provincial *demi-monde* I

played, I may tell you, no small part. The intellectual society of Nottingham was me. I was the toast of the flappers as I entered these *boites*, immaculate save for a flake or two of dandruff. Outside, the November rain oozed down the gutters. Within we were unaware of it. Maddened by the pulsing of aphrodisiacal Spanish guitars, relayed through the Tannoy, by the heady scent of the tropical greenery that decked the trellises, and the intense soulful hissing of the Italian Gaggia, we lived in another, a continental world. Against this background you could find me in some corner, with a court of followers, pushing the *cher maître* stuff to its logical conclusion. Behind me the Gaggia worked without steam; I, in my turn, steamed without working, talking of Schopenhauer and commercial propositions.

Intellectual cogency was interspersed with amorous dalliance. I was courting a toothsome, long-legged morsel whose

name was not, but would have been had she thought of it, Ernestine. She wore fur coats. She rode all the time in taxis. She smoked exotic cigarettes. She was the sort of girl who liked to be kissed all the way up the arm to the shoulder. She had a teddy bear that answered the telephone for her. You always felt she had just that moment got off a horse. Her two pleasures in life were ritzing and slumming. We used to go into Sneinton and try to get robbed. All her friends had inflatable lifejackets and, by God, if I'd have had more influence they would have needed to use them. (They went sailing, you understand.)

Ah, whither has gone the visionary gleam? Nowadays things have changed. Everyone is turning Anglo-Catholic and telling you that God doesn't have to exist for people to believe in Him. One meets the sugar beet men occasionally. It is difficult to know what to say about them; most are very respectable, and in a position to afford a lawyer. For us, to

marry, to work was betrayal, but now one meets them and they are employed and married and with children; one hardly dare remind them of the time when they threw stones at the register-office because of what it stood for. Occasionally one meets a surviving vagabond, but they are all either just coming out of or going into a mental hospital, or are curiously out of touch; one came up to me with a commercial venture, but it hadn't the vision of our old commercial ventures (he wanted to go round from door to door exchanging new non-iron shirts for old-fashioned ones, and then *melting the others down*; as I say, he was very out of touch). What happened to the one called Colin Wilson God only knows (those two were always on good terms).

Some of us rejected the lure of the respectable, and went into universities, professional intellectual vagabonds in the thesis-writing world, still trying to meet John Lehmann and not succeeding, still unmarried and not liking it. But the thing is: we were angry before the others even started niggling; we were beat before Jack Kerouac knew one end of a car from the other; we were Zen-Buddhists before J. D. Salinger knew how to spell *Bhagavadgita*. Of course if this were America this strain in the national intellectual tradition would have been written up a thousand times. As it is you must make do with passing chronicles of this sort.

Party Advantage

THREE happy he whom Fortune's flight

Has kept politically Right.

All Clements are not Clem for him,

All Barbaras Babs, all Jameses Jim,

All Roberts Bob, all Richards Dick,

All Philips Phil, all Victors Vic.

His hierarchy knows no Nyes,

No Hughies, Mannies, Jos or Vis.

In short, he rarely calls his leaders

By chummy names from junior readers.

Thus, though he was the partisan

Of Nev and Tony, Win and Stan,

And could be termed the present pal

Of Derry, Sel, Quin, Dunc and Al,

He has (let's face it) too much sense

To practise such impertinence . . .

Instead he peacefully sits back

And puts his trust in Rab and Mac.

ERIC WALMSLEY

Bareback with the Quorn?

By ERIC KEOWN

DO you play the Circus Game, too? However staggered I may be by the gentlemen balancing on knitting-needles and the ladies turned to catherine-wheels in the roof, I am always deep in urgent private business. For I am allowed one bisque, to become any single performer; not, as you might imagine, to sense the glory of cheers rising in a vast auditorium but simply to give colour to more humdrum events. A circus audience, after all, expects the incredible. How much more splendid if the most bizarre talents could burst on a social scene totally unprepared for them. I have often thought, for instance, of the ecstasies of drawing up at the Dorchester on a monowheel and handing it with quiet authority to the commissioner.

This year at Olympia Bertram Mills' programme kept me in a lather of indecision. At first my money was on Clarinda. She begins elegantly enough on a large bareback horse in overdrive, and the next moment is standing on its heaving rump with as much emotion as

if waiting for a train. Could I be Clarinda for a day, what greater joy than to empurple the Quorn by leading it across country in this dazzling manner?

But then Ferry Forst arrived, with an unorthodox facility for evaporating girls. Admittedly he discovers them again, in various oubliettes, but that seemed, for my purposes, beside the point. There are times in the life of every man when, dining companionably in his favourite *bistro*, he wishes suddenly he were alone. How lovely then to be Mr. Forst.

Briefly I considered being either Wini or Carmen, endowed with the power to leap into a chandelier during an ambassador's speech at the Mansion House and spin hilariously by my teeth. But when the 5 Elwardos proved how easily they can go upstairs on one hand, I could hardly fail to see myself making an entry to the Duchess of Worplesdon's ball that would not quickly be forgotten.

In the end Clarinda won, but she only just got home by a sea-lion's whisker.



"Oh good! Just in time to catch the Test broadcast."

Toby Competitions

No. 49—Beware of the Greeks...

YOU are invited to write a thank you letter for a Christmas present which was not, frankly, "just what you wanted." Limit 120 words.

A prize consisting of a framed *Punch* original, to be selected from all available drawings, is offered for the best entry. Runners-up will receive a book token to the value of one guinea. Entries (any number but each on a separate piece of paper and accompanied by a separate entry token, cut out from the bottom left-hand corner of this page) by first post on Friday, January 9, to TOBY COMPETITION No. 49, *Punch*, 10 Bouverie Street, London, E.C.4.

Report on Competition No. 46 (What's to Come)

Prophecies for 1959 were requested, but the seers must have been gazing in shop windows rather than crystals, so few and, for the most part, unrewarding were the entries. Christmas postal delays may also have been responsible. The prize goes to:

DR. HUGH WALLIS,
OVERDALE,
RICHMOND HILL
LANSDOWN
BATH

for this forecast:

In the medical world great progress will be made towards the defeat of the common cold. In the late autumn a figure well known in university circles will achieve the final cure. But before details of his formula become known there will be much argument about the advisability of releasing something which seems likely to reduce absenteeism, increase industrial production and give rise to large-scale unemployment. Opposition will come from a famous trade organization, and the sensation of the year is likely to be the kidnapping of the research worker and his being stowed away involuntarily in the seventeenth American moon-probe rocket. He and his formula will be well on their way to the moon as the year closes.

Book tokens for the following:

Election buzzes being rife in Jan.
A Labour peer will plug the Common Man
While Tory matrons and their displaced
debs
Knit woolly mufflers for the hungry plebs.

The plebs themselves? I prophesy that
one

At least of them will give our critics fun
By shedding novel angry tears in print
With some such title as *My Stint! My
Stint!*—

Unless, of course, he thinks a Drama
best
Where Life is raw and Indians are West.

Such joys as these, in Nineteen Fifty-nine,
Will loose the triggers all along the line;

CHESTNUT GROVE

Wallis Mills contributed unremittingly to *PUNCH* from 1898 to 1940



Nervous Suitor. "I—ER—WISH TO MARRY YOUR DAUGHTER, SIR!"
Parent. "WELL, MY BOY, HADN'T YOU BETTER SEE HER MOTHER FIRST?"
Nervous Suitor. "I HAVE, SIR, AND—ER—I STILL WISH TO MARRY YOUR DAUGHTER."

February 9 1910

Th' Election issue when the year expires
Will be "A Land of Misters—or
Esquires?"—

Roger Till, 14 Western Hill, Durham

Artists of the Acorporist School will transfer their allegiance from Nicholas Stuntier, the painter by boomerang, to Nigel Plumait, whose contemplative yet stimulating studies will be produced completely by the agency of ants—but before the end of the year the Formicists will be yielding place to the Muscaists. The President of the Royal Academy will remain aloof from these rewarding trends.—Mrs. M. G. Lloyd, Homeleigh, Park Place, Newbridge, Mon.

Grave allegations of heartless intrusion by the Press into private grief will be silenced by a reassuring report of the Press Council. A virulent campaign by the Parliamentary Labour Party criticising the decision of the Government to introduce a Supplementary Budget in 1959 will collapse at the threat of a General Election. The Home Secretary will express concern at the alarming increase in crimes of violence, and promise to look into the possibility of action being taken to check this regrettable trend.—F. H. E. Townshend-Rose, 111 Thornbury Road, Osterley, Middx.

FASHION: The "Shaggy Look" catches on; Raymond introduces artificial beards in bright colours for evening wear.

ART: Graham Sutherland designs next year's best selling Christmas card.

POLITICS: Conscription for National Service will be restricted to youths born under the sign of Taurus.

TRANSPORT: Traffic on the Preston by-pass will come to a standstill on Easter Monday, due to hordes of trippers coming specifically to see the Preston by-pass.—Michael Barry, 24 Hamilton Avenue, Harborne, Birmingham 17

Literature in 1959: Great Books
ICECOLD: THAT'S ALEX.

An explosive portrait by a Texan who has never met Alex Atkinson and has no wish to do so.—Michael Birt, Stone House, Staunton-on-Wye, Herefordshire

☆

"A young couple is still blushing over an experience at a recent garden party. The hostess came over to where they were seated and said how sorry she was that the husband had been too ill to come to her last party. As he started to blurt out that he hadn't been ill and ask what party she was talking about, his wife poked him under the table.

Then she looked down—following the hostess's gaze—and realized in horror that her frantic signals were plainly visible through the glass-topped table. M. Weinstock."—Reader's Digest, July 1958

"A young couple—friends of mine—are still blushing over an experience at a recent party. The hostess came over to where they were seated and said she was sorry the husband had been too ill to attend the last party she had given.

Without thinking, he blurted out that he hadn't been ill, and knew nothing about it. Meanwhile his wife was frantically kicking him under the table.

Then she looked down and realized to her horror that the table had a glass top and her warning signals were clearly visible to her hostess. J. McIntosh."

Sunday Express, August 24, 1958

Worth telling twice, anyway.

In the City



Unit Trust Year

ALL the portants suggest that in the world of investment 1959 will be a Unit Trust Year. These trusts have recently shown signs of sturdy life and there is every prospect of their continued growth over the coming year.

The unit trust is the ideal form of security for the small investor who wants to protect himself against the risk of inflation and at the same time take a share in the growth of the British economy. There is no other way in which one can with a very modest stake acquire a small piece of ownership in the giants of British industry, commerce and finance. Admittedly they are a form of investment that is not devoid of risk. Equities can go up and also down and the investor who buys unit trusts should realize that he must take the rough with the smooth, the possibility of temporary loss as well as the prospect of capital appreciation.

The experience of the past ten years provides fairly convincing evidence that the ground-swell, whether in terms of inflation or of industrial expansion, is all in favour of ordinary shares and, therefore, of the best unit trusts. There may be little inflation in 1959 but expansion is unquestionably under way.

The way for unit trusts is likely to be smoothed next year for political as well as economic reasons. The Conservative Central Office committee under the chairmanship of Sir Toby Low, which was instructed by Mr. R. A. Butler to look into the problem of popularization of investment, is expected to make recommendations that will single out unit trusts as the best way of securing the link between the worker and the ownership of industry.

The older groups have shown exceptional activity of late. The Municipal and General, the senior member of the club, has made a working arrangement with one of the best City finance houses, Robert Benson, Lonsdale, and new ideas are being evolved by them.

The National Group is going into partnership with another famous City house, Rothschilds, and a new trust under their joint auspices will be making its bow at any moment.

The Bank Insurance Trust, still the largest group in this movement, is now quietly digesting the large and heavily over-subscribed issue of Investment

Trust Units which it launched recently. It has plenty of ideas on which it is working and before many months are out another trust is likely to make its appearance in this particular galaxy of highly successful ventures.

Unicorn and Orthodox are two other names to be conjured with and of which more will be heard in the New Year.

It is to the two newcomers in this field that attention has recently been especially drawn. The British Shareholders Trust, launched by Philip Hill, Higginson & Co., had a magnificent send-off and with a little help from its new "gadget" of hire purchase facilities has in a very few weeks sold close on

£5 million worth of units. This may soon take the lead as the largest single trust in the movement, though it is not within reach of being the largest group.

The latest comer is the Crosby Trust, which comes from the house of Robert Fleming, a hallowed name in the field of investment trusts. Scotland and England taught the world the art of the managed investment trust and it was the grandfather of the firm's present chairman who pioneered the movement here. With this investment experience behind the Crosby Trust, all should be well for those who buy its units.

With this array of units before him the modest investor has at his disposal an embarrassment of ways in which to participate in the industrial expansion and the increasing prosperity which 1959—political disasters excepted—seems to offer us.

LOMBARD LANE



In the Country

By the Sea

WHEN you sit down next in that little restaurant and, after a gentle bracing of the will-power, order *calamares en su tinta*, be not over-impressed with the exoticism of it all. Like as not the squid you will eat was caught by me.

For years we've been dumping them over the side by the hundredweight, for in the Irish Sea *loligo vulgaris* is as common as haddock or cod or whiting and frequents the same ground. It gives also the same sort of echo on a sounder, and great used to be the cursing when the sounder indicated good fish but the net brought up squids—or "inks" as we call them.

Then some genius in Aberdeen—a war-time victim perhaps of Italian cooking—realized that This was It. At first you could cart the squid away from the boats for next to nothing. But others got into the act. To-day *loligo* fetches a steady £2 the box at practically any port around the British Isles. Currently whiting gets 10s. for the same box—though if the Icelanders succeed...

Off go the squids to Aberdeen to be cleaned and iced and dispatched to the Mediterranean. Like as not they'll be coming back soon in tins.

So does the pattern of our fishing change. A few years ago it was prawns—not the real prawn but the Norway

lobster, Dublin Bay prawn or *scampi*. They too had been shovelled back over the side in vast quantities. Now... well, what do you pay for *scampi* on your expense account?

But whether *loligo* will ever match *scampi* as a delicacy in these islands I doubt. To my knowledge no fisherman had ever tasted one until last night. And then, in a mood of bravado, I did. After cleaning, a flat triangle of pale, boneless, slightly translucent flesh is left... as also after cooking—after, it seemed, any amount of cooking.

I don't think I've been so admired as when I took those first few mouthfuls. The flavour lay between lobster and oyster. The texture was of inner tube, well-cooked, tender inner tube, nubbly positively and yet... nice.

But how fishing changes! Fifty years ago nobody bothered much about anything save flats—plaice and brill, turbot and sole. The seine net put an end to that by giving the small boat the power of a big trawler. Now in inshore waters cod and haddock are following the flats. Soon whiting will be scarce. But as one fish grows rarer, new markets appear for what is left. Last year's dumping is this year's delicacy.

Now what we all await is the great moment of discovery for our last untapped resource. Somewhere in the world somebody must surely dote on jellyfish.

WILFRED MCNEILLY

FOR
WOMEN

Don't, Mrs. Disraeli!

"I THOUGHT I had married a publisher," said Lady Dorothy Macmillan. "And now look what I've got!" The exclamation would have satisfied Mary Anne Disraeli. Mary Anne was always frank. Though sometimes, one must confess, she carried her frankness just a little too far.

The first time she met Disraeli she told him promptly that she "liked silent, melancholy men." Disraeli, one feels, was hardly s. and m. And when, in spite of this, he married her, and Louis-Napoleon took them for a picnic, rowed them up the Thames and ran them aground, Mrs. D. was no more delicate. She brusquely informed the adventurer of Boulogne and Strasbourg: "You should not undertake things you cannot accomplish."

As a hostess she was a trifle embarrassing. Sir William Harcourt, admiring a picture of Venus, was told: "It is nothing to the Venus that Dizzy has in his bedroom." ("That I can well believe," said Harcourt, with a bow.)



Those who invited Mary Anne to stay were no more fortunate. "Lady Blank," she said, over eggs-and-kidneys one morning, "there is a most indecent picture in our bedroom. I've been awake half the night stopping Dizzy looking at it." The warning went from Wilton to Longleat, from Hatfield House to Arundel. The pictures were taken down. Alas! a chate-laine revealed that the Disraelis had slept next door to Lord Harding. "I am," cried Mary Anne, "the happiest of women. I have slept between the greatest orator and the greatest soldier of the time."

When Dizzy was urged to take a peerage it was Mary Anne who explained: "My dear, he would not go to the Upper House for the world. He enjoys his fame too much in the Lower House." It was Mary Anne who told the Baroness de Rothschild that her baby "might be the future Messiah—who knows?" It was Mary Anne, good-natured, volatile little woman,

who hung the drawing-room at Hughenden with "wallpaper of green, dotted with fleur-de-lys." It was Mary Anne who told a pre-eminent classical scholar that she never knew who came first, the Greeks or the Romans.

Oh, *don't*, Mrs. Disraeli! How can you go round at seventy, wearing "a white dress of delicate French muslin, powdered with purple pansies"? How can you bustle round in later life, in pink satin, a wreath on your head, saying everything that comes uppermost? How can you tell the Widow of Windsor that you always sleep with your arms round your husband's neck? And when she even forgives you this, and, in your final illness, sends you a telegram of royal solicitude, how can you just say "Bah!" and throw a spoon at the telegram?

And yet, before we appeal again: "Oh, *don't*, Mrs. Disraeli!" let us remember you have some claims to our gratitude. After all, it was you who bought Dizzy those raised pies from Fortnum's, and pulled the string of his shower-bath, and worshipped him. It was you who dyed his hyacinthine hair. It was you, Mary Anne, who plastered down the immortal curl on his forehead.

JOANNA RICHARDSON

Man in Kitchen

MR. K. F., plastics executive, is just like any plastics executive these days. He *adores* cooking and *insists* on fixing his wife's dinner-parties himself. Yet, laughs Mrs. K. F., he is still very much a man around the kitchen!

The day before the party Mr. K. F. likes to prepare the *Potage Superb*, for which he switches on the electric cooker's fast-heating hot-plate while he scrabbles for onions in the potato shelf of the vegetable rack. Five minutes later

when he is kicking a poor defenceless carrot under the sink there is a frightful smell and a packet of tobacco bursts into flame on the slow-burning grill—a mistake any man could make when his wife's only had this particular cooker ten years. Next, Mr. K. F. eagerly reads the football news for last March. Then he shoves the paper back among the potatoes, shakes half a packet of plasterer's filler over the pastry-board, scrubs for ten minutes and dries with a clean pillow-case from the laundry-box.

Now all is ready for Mr. K. F.'s

vegetable chopping! After thirty minutes Mrs. K. F. asks if he wouldn't rather have the electric *fire* on if it's just for the heat. After forty she says "Personally I always use the mincer" and gets the look shoddy female cooks deserve.

To salt the *Potage* just enough Mr. K. F. adds a lump of damp castor sugar the size of a *small* walnut. He pops the whole thing steaming hot in the fridge and (for it is now past midnight) gets home early next day to tackle the *Filets de Boeuf Extraordinaires*. For this

he cuts up 2 lb. of sirloin with his wife's dressmaking scissors, and hammers at the strips until a priceless Venetian goblet bounces off the kitchen table. Now—having first pointed out to Mrs. K. F. how careless that was of her—he gets from a Piccadilly green-grocer's paper-carrier a jar of quail's breasts and 42s.-worth of tinned button mushrooms; rolls up his sleeves and wrests the pastry-board from Mrs. K. F.—who, silly woman, was only using it for pastry.

Even to begin to prepare this exciting recipe (wheeled last summer from a deaf road-mender in the Apennines) Mr. K. F. uses twenty-five plates, a great bunch of knives and forks, eleven saucepans and a silver muffin-dish. Mrs. K. F. totters to the sink with one more pile, trips over the bread-bin and says feebly what about the potatoes.

What *about* the potatoes, Mr. K. F. says blankly. Mrs. K. F. says she thought he was doing all the cooking, potatoes too. Mr. K. F. says he thought she knew he thought *she* did things like potatoes, dash it when a man works in an office all day—

At this point the doorbell rings and Mrs. K. F. cries "You go, dear!" Mr. K. F. goes. He never comes back either, owing to having to pour the drinks out. "But there," says Mrs. K. F., "see him sitting at the dinner-table beaming you'd think he'd done the lot. Yes, a real man about the kitchen, that's my hubby!"

ANGELA MILNE

☆

"Rarer than Sarah"

MOST dwellers south of Stockport, north of Windermere and east of Todmorden seem to think Lancashire lasses all wear clogs and shawls and bump up their statistics on Bury black puddings and Eccles cakes. For this, maybe, some recent over-conscientious Rep revivals of *Hindle Wakes* are partially responsible, but honestly, that stuff called the Industrial Revolution is as out-of-date as Manchester Victoria Station.

Since then, we female young Lancastrians have slit our shawls up into stoles and beaten out our clog-irons into tough stiletto heels. Our diet has embraced the deep-freeze brussels

sprout and six-variety custard, and our language range has stretched from "Eech, bah gum!" environs to the bounds of "nylon tricot," "stereophonic sound" and "intercontinental ballistic missile."

We are now emancipated, dated, armour-plated, under-estimated, like any other female in the British Isles. And we have had our Sacks the same as anybody else, though some of us most cleverly wove our own, which is one up on the Potteries, the Fens, the Lakes, the Black Country and the Rhondda Valley.

Where, then, does this modern fallacy originate? In the cobbled back streets of Radcliffe, where the ferrule of a 1958 long-handled tartan brolly still strikes sparks along the stones? Or in the sudden, frequent deluges of rain from Pennine-punctured cloud, which make us cast our coats about our heads and run?

Nonagenarians in Accrington and Burnley can remember still the Sarahs of the song; but it takes some doing while their great-grand-daughters keep on rocking and rolling in their trews or dropping hints of broderie anglaise beneath their skirts. "Yes, things 'as changed," says Mr. Albert Ormroyd (ninety-six) with an un-nostalgic twinkle in his eye.

True, those black-pudding stalls still dominate the open markets here, but they sell Cellophane-wrapped pies as well, and smart, white cartons of Selected Chicken Titbits. And though the Clog Dance keeps its old tradition fresh for local pageants, village weddings and the like, so does that funny floral dance of a certain other county.

I would say to all those non-Lancastrians who judge us from afar, "Reserve your pity for the little Sputnik doggies and the even smaller kittens on the sixth-form biology benches. For the light of Helena Rubinstein shines bright among our dark, satanic mills, and our Empire bosoms are just as high as yours."

HAZEL TOWNSON

☆

All I Wish, Myself

O BRAVE New Year, may thy decrees

From Paris, London, Rome,
Be in such gradual degrees

As not to wreck my home;
May each collection's novel themes,
Each fashion's fickle gems,
Mean merely in or out of seams
Or up and down of hems.

CAROLE PAINE



"Are you seriously asking this court to believe that although you were standing right at the scene you didn't see a thing?"

Henry and Lulu—2

A Scuffle with Firearms

By MONICA FURLONG

HENRY sat at his office desk existing till lunch-time. He drew a large, blank form towards him and began a delicate piece of art-work in red and black ballpoint. He wrote "H.J. loves L.R.," and drew a picture of two hearts impaled on an arrow, an unsophisticated shish kebab. This was as far as he dare let imagination go, but underneath it, allowing himself one cry from the heart, he wrote the name "Lulu." As he worked a tail of his stiff black hair stood up behind his head like an aerial of probity.

On the other side of town Lulu

Ripple was waking up in her Chelsea flat and groping for the coffee-pot. She had eyes of a melting, butterfly blue colour, and scarcely were they open on any day of her short life before she began counting its approaching pleasures like beads on a well-blessed rosary.

"Half past ten the Countess," she thought happily. The Countess was an apostate from some European aristocracy who spent her hard-working life doing things to people's faces. In her salon in South Kensington she

steamed them and wrung them out and finally hung them out to dry in her little plush rest-room. Lulu relished the Countess as a philatelist relishes a first-day cover.

After the Countess coffee with Achille, and after Achille a visit to an American lady who took half an inch off one's hips by vibration. Then a rapier glance at some delicious shoes in Old Bond Street, a quick drink with Peregrine, and so to lunch with . . . She had a glance at her dishevelled engagement book . . . lunch, good heavens, with Henry Jaggers. She had met Henry only once before and he had been drunk then—yes, surely he must have been.

"My name is Henry Jaggers," he had said to her, "and I have fallen in love with you. Shakespeare's fifty-seventh sonnet will give you a rough outline of my feelings." Nice but nutty, Lulu thought.

* * * * *

Long before lunch-time and Henry the locusts had got at Lulu's shining day and were nibbling off all the leaves. Mark had telephoned. Wanting to marry her again. Mark was the only man Lulu could think of who frightened her, with the possible exception of her father the Bishop. Mark was a nice boy, and he had money, more money than the people Lulu knew who were the gilt security, threadbare kind. But he *would* go on about marrying her. Some day soon, she knew, he would grab her up by her drooping fawn hair, sling her over his shoulder and march her off to his expensive cave on the Riviera. Or to his beastly, destroyer-size yacht. Bad sailor as she was, Lulu dreaded it. To make matters worse she had borrowed money off him one week when a store with whom she had an account were particularly pressing and so she felt under an obligation to be nice to him.

When she met Henry he grasped at once that something was wrong and longed to help. He had been practising witty conversation at home for days now but could not reproduce any of it brought face to face with the longed-for Lulu. The asparagus was being cleared by the time he felt able to speak of anything except the menu and the wine-list.

"I rather wish, you know, that you were drowning in heavy seas on a beach



watched by hundreds of people. Nobody dares to save you—except me, of course."

"Darling, how nice of you," said Lulu absently.

"Or stricken with some desperately nasty and infectious disease, so that your friends had deserted you. I would still be around, naturally."

"Thanks terribly," she said, toying with a breadstick.

"Or—and this is really my favourite—set upon by a gang of fearful brigands, who wanted to take you back to their mountain den to cook for them."

"Like Wendy in Peter Pan," said Lulu with a flicker of interest.

"So that I could fight them all single-handed," he went on. But Lulu was not listening any longer. The thought of the brigands was too painful an analogy and she was realizing anew that any day now Mark would intimidate her into marrying him.

"I don't want to get married," she burst out, and two large tears ran down her face and curdled the sauce on the Lobster Thermidor. Henry was aghast.

"But I haven't asked you yet," he said, hot with embarrassment that she could read his mind so easily and wondering what other pages she had scanned. Too wretched for bush-beating, Lulu heaved out the painful story of her persecution and even confessed the shameful details of the debt.

"How much?"

"Seventy pounds." Henry looked grave, and began doing little sums on the back of his cheque-book. Swiftly adding together his rent and the hire-purchase payments on his scooter he subtracted them from the total and found he had exactly seventy pounds.

"That settles that then. Now as to Mark—you had better leave him to me. If you would just give me his address."

"But what will you do?"

"I thought perhaps a duel."

"What a terribly good idea," said Lulu, charmed with the simplicity of it. "You mean—kill each other."

"If necessary."

"Suppose you only killed him. That would mean life imprisonment, and you know the plumbing is simply terrible."

"That would be a bore," Henry admitted.



"I would write to you, though," offered Lulu in a burst of imagination.

"Would you? Would you really? You are a darling."

"And I could send you a file baked in a cake, if you don't feel it's too hackneyed."

"I bet you're a really marvellous cook."

"And I could come and look at you through the bars on visiting days. I saw the sweetest little hat with a black veil yesterday."

"Lulu—if I may so describe you—you really are a honey."

"But I had better not buy it yet, do you think? He might kill you."

"He might."

"Then I really should have to marry Mark and go off to St. Tropez with him. A fate worse than a fate worse than death. Daddy would be furious. Mark's not even an Anglican."

"You shall never marry Mark."

"I do hope you're right. But jolly good luck anyhow."

So Henry and Mark fought a duel—a scuffle with firearms—one morning in Hyde Park. The police intervened,

naturally, before either was killed or maimed too badly, though one of the constables caught Henry a nasty crack across the cheek with his truncheon. In fact the only unpleasant feature of the whole business was that Henry's superior felt obliged to express his displeasure at Henry's appearance.

... "Coming in here, Mr. Jaggers, practically gangrenous and reeking of antiseptic. Where do you think this is—Scutari? I tell you, Mr. Jaggers, this is the kind of thing that gets the Civil Service a bad name."

Anyhow, Mark withdrew quite contented with his seventy pounds—it had largely been motives of thrift which made him cling so to Lulu—and transferred his offers to a blonde who was splendidly obvious in the places where Lulu was reticent. Lulu was free to riffle through the men she knew in search of a more congenial husband. Henry, after a rather painful few weeks with an empty bank account, suddenly received a small legacy from an uncle and sold his scooter in favour of a bubble-car. The beauty of this was that it held two people—never more and rarely, if Henry could help it, less.



BOOKING OFFICE

A Plaque for Lamb House

ON the wall of Lamb House, Rye, there is a commemorative plaque to Henry James, but none to E. F. Benson, who succeeded him as the house's owner. This has always seemed to me a little unfair, for Benson, though doubtless inferior as a novelist to his illustrious predecessor (or so, at least, the best critics assure us), was not only a gifted purveyor of popular fiction but, at his best, a literary artist of considerable distinction. Yet Benson's reputation, since his death, has slumped even more sharply than is the case with most popular authors. Literary people tend to shrug him aside as an Edwardian "society" novelist: "E. F. Benson? Oh yes, he wrote *Dodo*, didn't he?" A few may remember the "Mapp and Lucia" series, or *David Blaize*; but the vast majority of his books have fallen into total oblivion, and all of them, without exception, have been long out of print.

The war, no doubt, was partly to blame for this: Benson died in 1940, and at that date publishers were chary of reprinting anything but whodunits. Benson, moreover, was the kind of writer who is easily forgotten in times of crisis: his books sold well but not sensationally, and he wasn't highbrow enough, from the publisher's point of view, to have a "prestige" value. He has now been dead for eighteen years, and I suspect that he is about due for a revival.

As a writer he was not in the first class, and he never set out to be more than an entertainer. Also, he wrote far too much: his total output over fifty years or so must have run well into three figures, and as a result much of his work has a rather vapid, diluted quality, though he never fell far below his own standards of craftsmanship, which were high. Benson, moreover, was a snob: in his youth he was fatally beglamoured by Edwardian high-life, and though he professed, in later days, to a certain disillusionment, he remained naïvely susceptible to duchesses. Like

Congreve, he attached more importance to being a gentleman than to the profession of authorship, and this perhaps is at the root of his failure to be more than a good second-rater. It is not that his books are amateurish: on the contrary, they display a consistently professional expertise; but they lack just that extra "bite," that saving grain of originality, which might have given them a permanent value.

Even so, how enjoyable, in an unpretentious way, most of them are! Benson deliberately aimed low, but he seldom failed to hit his mark, and from a purely technical point of view his achievement is remarkable; even his dullest novels are admirably constructed, and the smooth, facile yet civilized prose makes him an unfailing pleasure to read. His early books are, on the whole, the least attractive, though the *Dodo* series have great period charm; and many of the other pre-1914 novels

—*The Money Market*, *Mammon and Co.*, *The Challenors*—can still be read with enjoyment. During and after the first war came a series of novels each with a male Christian name as title: *Alan*, *Peter*, *Rex*, *Paul*, *Mike*, etc. These might be described as crypto-queer, dealing as they so often do with romantic friendships between young men (the hero usually marries his friend's sister); *David Blaize* (1916), on the other hand, is one of the first public-school stories to refer overtly to homosexuality. Later, in the 'twenties and 'thirties, came the famous "Mapp and Lucia" series, which are possibly Benson's most enduring claim to fame: social comedies, with a strongly farcical element and a pleasing touch of purely personal bitchiness. They are less facile and more pointed than most of Benson; obviously he greatly enjoyed writing them.

Among the rest, *Colin* and *Colin the Second* are worth a mention: polite essays in romantic diabolism, with a slightly Dorian Gray flavour, though written in the 'twenties. They are linked with another of Benson's preoccupations—ghosts and the occult; so too is *The Luck of the Vails*, a thriller which Benson thought well of, though in fact it is one of his less successful attempts in this genre. One could mention many more; and it should not be forgotten, by the way, that Benson wrote an excellent book about the Brontës, as well as three most agreeable volumes of memoirs.

Such predictions are dangerous, but I suspect that posterity—if it gets a chance to judge—will find that Benson compares more than favourably with a number of his contemporaries (such as Hugh Walpole, for example) who achieved far greater réclame. Trollope, forgotten for fifty years, became a best-seller in the last war; and it wouldn't surprise me overmuch if the same were to happen to E. F. Benson. I suggest that some up-and-coming publisher should start reprinting his novels as a long-term speculation: they might well become the favourite "escape" reading for World War III.

JOCELYN BROOKE

NOVEL FACES—XLIX



OLIVIA MANNING

Among Miss Manning's tales of varied genus
A Different Face confronts *The Doves of Venus*.

Italian Bouquet. Samuel Chamberlain.
A Gourmet Book. Hamish Hamilton, 75/-

The archness of Mr. Chamberlain's style as he attempts to do for Italy what he did for France in *Bouquet de France* may alienate some armchair gourmets less perennially good-tempered than the author. It might have been wiser to extend his decision to deal only gastronomically with Rome, Florence and Venice to the whole peninsula, instead of attempting to compose a guide-book to eating and sight-seeing, which leads him to such remarks as that the tourists who swarm in Pisa are mostly intent on seeing the Leaning Tower. However, when, in the words of Kipling, he "calls on the gods and squats to his cooking pots" Mr. Chamberlain must be regarded with respect. The section entitled "A Treasury of Italian Recipes" is particularly valuable both for its recipes for eggs and for a sensible exposition on the Italian preparation of raw materials in the kitchen.

The book is illustrated with the author's sketches and photographs, both of which are painstaking rather than distinguished, though at Lucca he scores a left and right with a dramatic picture of the façade of San Michele and a delicate composition of a stall of domestic utensils.

V. G. P.

The Cardinal de Bernis. Sir Marcus Cheke. Cassell, 25/-

The Cardinal de Bernis came from the Midi; his charm reflected "sun-burnt tiles, singing crickets, the glow-worms winking in the Mediterranean night." Madame de Pompadour made this penniless younger son Envoy to Venice, then Foreign Minister of France; he arranged the switch of alliances before the Seven Years War.

Of course he did not last. He proved more than usually incompetent: but he recovered to become the most spectacular of all French Ambassadors to the Holy See. Sir Marcus tells a rattling good story with the insight of an experienced diplomat. His biography is witty, skillfully constructed and particularly well indexed. It depicts fantastic luxury, favouritism and intrigue: Venice, the Court of France, Rome, are all admirably



"For heaven's sake! No! No! No!"

delineated—the Duc de Richelieu is "a frivolous and corrupt old stallion" (though he invented mayonnaise); when Louis XV died Versailles was "like an aviary in flames."

The Cardinal made a superb ambassador, "like a queen bee" amid the splendours of his rococo entourage. His entertainments were staggering, the climax of eighteenth-century Rome. Decades after, Pio Nono remarked "The Cardinal's dinners in Rome are still remembered in the odour of sanctity." A sparkling and entertaining book.

J. E. B.

Second Thoughts. Michel Butor. Faber, 18/-

The French dearly love an innovator; and M. Butor, who was awarded the Prix Renaudot for this novel, has been much publicized for his invention known as *le chosisme*, and also for writing his narrative in the second person singular. This latter device, apparently new in France, was used in England during the early nineteen-thirties by Mr. James Cleugh in *Ballet for Three Masks*, and

also, during the same period, by a young lady who wrote a novel entitled *Beau Lover*; while the long catalogues of objects (the contents of a man's pockets, for instance) which M. Butor uses to demonstrate the importance of *things* in our daily lives, has already been done in *Ulysses* and the short stories of Peter Chamberlain. The impact of novelty, therefore, is considerably less to an English critic; and what remains—in this minutely-detailed account of a train-journey between Paris and Rome, made by a middle-aged business-man with the object of deserting his ageing wife and setting up permanently with his younger mistress? One cannot deny the virtuosity; but the effect, in the long run, is soporific—not, perhaps, what the author altogether intended.

J. M.-R.

A History of Book Illustration. David Bland. Faber, 84/-

Beginning at about 2000 B.C. Mr. David Bland takes us through the history of book illustration until the present day. The story starts with Mediaeval and Oriental illuminations, and eventually brings us to the invention of printing and its result on illustration. By the end of the seventeenth century the different countries of Europe were already establishing individual styles. The eighteenth century liked illustrated books, but the great age of book illustration was the nineteenth century, when for a time almost all novels were illustrated. Mr. Bland is concerned, of course, only with the better artists, rather than the innumerable second-raters, many of whom are not without interest. It is surely rather spinsterish at this stage to speak of the work of a great artist like Beardsley as "repellent," even if this judgment is tempered with praise for his technical skill. There is

GOOD THINGS TO COME

A NEW year, a new calendar, a diary as yet barely blemished. What are we all in for in 1959? Can we be sure of anything? Yes. PUNCH once a week. But only if we make sure. PUNCH can reach you by post from us, by boy from the newsagent, by lucky chance from the bookstall. To be certain of getting your personal antidote in fifty-three irresistible doses, ORDER PUNCH NOW, and face the New Year with a certain smile. Subscriptions: Great Britain and Eire £2 16s.; Canada (By Canadian magazine post) £2 10s. (\$7.25); Elsewhere Overseas £3 (U.S.A. \$9.00). Write to: Department ED., PUNCH, 10 Bouverie Street, London, E.C.4. U.S.A. and Canadian readers may remit by cheques on their own banks. Other overseas readers should consult their bankers or remit by postal money order.

a splendid lithograph by Bonnard illustrating Verlaine, and one of Picasso's plates to Buffon's Natural History. The American illustrative artists are a shade disappointing when examined, giving an impression of over-dramatization. Russia's Bilibin might perhaps have been included. However, in such a solid history every name can certainly not be mentioned.

A. P.

AT THE PLAY

Cinderella (COLISEUM)
Macbeth (OLD VIC)

ZOOLOGICAL tendencies and a reluctant belief in magic seem to be the only points in which the big modern pantomime differs from the straight musical. This year *Cinderella* has live geese, live ponies, and a live dog, and the pumpkin is turned into a carriage that must have made Christmas for the Electricity Board; but there is far more spectacle than humour, and the whole thing is laced together with blue jokes, so that father can feel he's had his

money's-worth. In this I think father is damagingly under-rated. Pantomime was fuller and funnier when it was aimed honestly at children.

Rodgers and Hammerstein have been at work, and though their music and lyrics are smoothly professional the theme appears to have cramped them. More striking are the dresses and lavish decoration of Loudon Sainthill, who has filled a revolving stage with palatial effects; his dresses are splendid. But when we come down to what children and sensible adults, really want, i.e. to be made to roll in the aisles, the list is short. It was a good idea to have a highly sophisticated fairy godmother, who openly mocks at her ridiculous powers, and Betty Marsden puts a satiric edge on her performance which is excellent. It was an even better idea to let Kenneth Williams loose as an ugly sister; with his scalding voice and outrageous sense of parody he brings something quite new to the part. After that Jimmy Edwards, dull as the king but making up for it in a revue sketch demonstrating his eccentric mastery over lung-bursting instruments; and Ted Durante, in accomplished

knockabout as the other ugly sister. But there the laughs end, handing over too abruptly to display and sentiment.

Yana is an engaging Cinderella, and there are some nice little ballets. One other performance pleased. Incurable square that I am, quite proof to hep and writhe, I found Tommy Steele a refreshing Buttons—unspoiled, full of life and likeable.

There are moments in the Old Vic *Macbeth* when I had the impression that a mad Russian professor had somehow been asked to stay. This is a little unfair to Michael Hordern, an actor who usually delights me; but his *Macbeth* does suggest a neurotic intellectual rather than a tough general in a jam. He can speak Shakespeare beautifully—"Tomorrow and to-morrow," comes over nobly—but he is inclined here to vocal

REP SELECTION

Theatre Royal, Windsor, *Cinderella*, unspecified run.
Theatre Royal, York, *Goldilocks and the Three Bears*, until January 10th.
Theatre Royal, Lincoln, *Aladdin*, until January 14th.
Playhouse, Salisbury, *Cinderella*, until January 17th.



(Cinderella)

Buttons—TOMMY STEELE

The King—JIMMY EDWARDS

exaggeration. Beatrix Lehmann, equally far from my idea of Lady Macbeth, is much less a semi-barbarian grandee than a cynical Mayfair hostess. There is not much to inspire awe, and her sudden changes from treble to contralto are no help to the verse. This supposedly loving couple seemed ill-matched from the start; even on the Twelfth their castle can never have been a very happy place. Their best scene together comes after the banquet, when Macbeth sits defiantly at the head of the table, playing with a knife, and she stands dumb, for the first time crushed by a sense of doom.

Douglas Seale's production is as carefully plotted as all his work, but for once noise and bustle appear to have replaced feeling. Desmond Heeley's dresses are too civilized to strike any note of savagery; he has filled the stage too full, with two sets of stairs and an enormous portcullis which transports us uncomfortably to the zoo. In a patchy evening I was grateful for John Phillips' Macduff, Jack May's Banquo and Dennis Chinerny's Ross, an honest, well-spoken feudal trio.

Recommended

(Dates in brackets refer to *Punch* reviews)

Two for the Seesaw (Haymarket—24/12/58), history of a love affair in dialogue. *West Side Story* (Her Majesty's—24/12/58), gang-war American musical geared to Romeo and Juliet. *Not in the Book* (Criterion—16/4/58), comedy-thriller idea for family outing.

ERIC KEOWN

AT THE PICTURES

The Reluctant Debutante
Bachelor of Hearts
Mardi Gras

THE scene of *The Reluctant Debutante* (Director: Vincente Minnelli) is alleged to be London, and we get a few Metrocolor views of various London sights in support of this claim. But in a larger sense, its scene is the world that once, forty or fifty years ago, was the world described by many of the contributors to, and assumed to be that of most of the readers of, this very publication. That world is much smaller now, but some London stage comedies still succeed by displaying it to audiences who like to pretend it reflects their everyday life; and this comedy by William Douglas Home began as one of them.

In the film adaptation it is basically the same world, but with certain modifications. The New World has to be called on to redress the balance, and the bank balance, of the old: the young people here have to be American players (there are elaborately planted explanations of how they came to be involved in this thoroughly English story), and various points in the dialogue have to be adjusted. There are expected to be, not to put too fine a point on it, many more Americans in the paying audience, so that the English people who are irritated to hear Kay Kendall say "A to Zee" are a mere drop in the ocean of those who would regard it as, in the wrong sense, quaint for her to say "Zed."

English quaintness nevertheless is meant to be part of the appeal of this piece, on both sides of the Atlantic. Picturesque oddities like the Changing of the Guard may decorate it, but its very basis is the absurdity of the debutante system, the process of bringing a daughter "out," the round of dances and things that father has to pay for, and how exhausting it is for him. Whatever it was in the play, the emphasis here is on the parents, and that perfect light-comedy partnership Rex Harrison and Kay Kendall makes them very amusing—though very much of the fun is verbal, and the fact that very much of the dialogue runs to the comic formula of the crescendo misunderstanding, brief or extended, that arises from one person's persistently literal interpretation of another's half-metaphorical remark becomes rather insistently obvious.

Throughout *Bachelor of Hearts* (Director: Wolf Rilla) I was teased by a thirty-year-old reminiscence. Round about 1928 there was some unfortunate young Cambridge (Pembroke) undergraduate who got into the news and was alleged by an imaginative reporter to have referred to "the chaps at Pem." He was later left by his disgusted friends in some embarrassing position with a label ironically inscribed "With love from the chaps at Pem."

SKETCH



Wolf Hauser—HARDY KRUGER

Ann Wainwright—SYLVIA SYMS

Well, I have an idea that present-day Cambridge undergraduates will feel much the same kind of annoyance about this film, which is tremendously gay and playful about the lives of the young gentlemen and the pranks they get up to. The central figure is a German exchange student (Hardy Kruger), through whose eyes we are shown the beauties and curiosities of Cambridge before we watch him as the victim of an elaborate rag. This works up to a climax, involving him with six or seven girls in turn, which is essentially the old you-mustn't-be-found-here situation, the stuff of stage farces; but it is disguised with visually genuine Cambridge detail and quite entertainingly done.

Mardi Gras (Director: Edmund Goulding) in the same way uses the interest of authentic detail—the routine of Virginia Military Institute, "the West Point of the South," and the Mardi Gras festivities in New Orleans—to brighten a commonplace story. This moreover is a musical, with some admirably-done group song-and-action scenes. The eruptions of sentiment and misunderstanding that advance the plot and keep

the musical items apart are in their way as unwelcome as TV commercials, but as a whole the thing is enjoyable enough if you have any taste for this kind of slick, brightly-coloured nonsense.

* * * * *

Survey

(Dates in brackets refer to *Punch* reviews)

There is a new Disney nature film, *Secrets of Life*: wonderful coloured pictures, with much fascinating use of time-lapse photography, mostly of plants, insects and water-creatures. Chaplin's *The Great Dictator* is in London again; I found I enjoyed precisely the same bits of it as I did when I first wrote about it (8/1/41, if you're interested). *Wild Strawberries* (5/11/58) is still the best and most variously enjoyable film in London, and a little way out at the Paris-Pullman is the same director's earlier, simpler, hardly less pleasing work *Summer with Monika* (24/12/58). Emotional domestic piece with good work by Jean Simmons: *Home Before Dark* (24/12/58).

One excellent, very entertaining release *Bell, Book and Candle* (17/12/58). *Floods of Fear* (26/11/58) is a British imitation of an American film, competent but rather superficial and colourless.

RICHARD MALLETT

PUNCH INDEX

The indexes of PUNCH contributions are now issued separately. The latest, for July to December, 1958, may be obtained free on application to The Circulation Manager, PUNCH, 10 Bouverie Street, London, E.C.4.

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ON THE AIR

Hopalong Tell

SINCE it springs from an age-old set of very rigid principles, the cowboys-and-Indians formula is inflexible as to pattern but capable of adaptation in a variety of costume disguises. Thus Sherwood Forest serves as an admirable background for cowboys in jerkins and

dastardly braves in chain-mail; shift the scene to Switzerland, deck out the cattlemen as William Tell's merry cronies and the Indians (or rustlers) as the scheming henchmen of the Austrian governor of Schwyz, Uri and Unterwalden, and the familiar theme emerges in yet another variation.

Recently I watched Tell and his gang at work and found the whole set-up most refreshing. "William Tell" (ATV) is nothing if not swashbuckling. You need only unwind twenty feet of film to encounter a cry of pain, the twang of a crossbow, the thud of stool on head, or the glorious hullabaloo of a mediæval free-for-all. It contains most of the elements of those dashing yarns which kept us goggle-eyed beside the winter fireside in our youth. Whether it can work the same mysterious wonders on the imagination of a child as those feverishly-turned pages of print must remain to be seen. My own feeling is that television's juvenile dramas can never seriously compete with the entrancing, secret pleasure of a good, fat book read a chapter at a time, and savoured.

Nevertheless, there is much immediate pleasure for boys and girls in this crisply manufactured series of adventures. Coming to it as a new boy, I found some difficulty at first in establishing quite what was going on; but once I had sorted out the bads from the goods it was plain sailing, and I had a rollicking time. The authors have taken Schiller's character and involved him in a succession of clashes with Gessler and his men. Tell, I was pleased to learn from an early snatch of dialogue, is engaged on "resistance work." In the particular adventure I watched he paused in this noble enterprise to rescue a very fetching Italian lady whom Gessler was on the



NIGEL GREEN

(William Tell)
CONRAD PHILLIPS

point of marrying by force. I assumed that her Hollywood-type cleavage was built into the story as a sop to any grown-ups who might happen to be looking in. I cannot think it did the children any harm. The acting was enthusiastic. Tell's dialogue was perhaps a trifle mealy-mouthed, but Gessler, insolently handled by Willoughby Goddard, was a thoroughly acceptable villain of the deepest dye. I cheered his ultimate defeat and bafflement, and

made a note to watch some more of his never-ending battle with Tell's handful of stalwarts. (Tell's son, incidentally, with or without apple on hat, never appeared.) Must heroes not be fathers?

Talking of mealy-mouthed dialogue, I must award the prize for this to "The Lone Ranger" (BBC), one of the most unpleasantly smug and cliché-haunted wanderers in the whole of the Wild West. He sounds like a Sunday-school teacher who learned his job by correspondence course. And the last time I saw one of his films I was appalled by one of the most cold-blooded, spine-chilling scenes of murder by shooting I can remember seeing even in an adult Western. This, I feel, is not playing the game according to the rules. It is not difficult to implant sadism in the character of a child.

I wish a happy new year to those television workers on both channels who strive so long and so hard to please us, and who appear (if at all) simply as names in smallish print among the credits: the camera-crews, the film editors, the assistant producers, the floor-managers, the writers, the man who keeps on ringing up Richard Dimbleby, the engineers and technicians, the guardians of the Record Library, the artists, the painters, the carpenters, the assemblers of news, the drivers who whizz about the country with carloads of precious entertainers or cans of urgent film, the musicians, the composers, the man who keeps ringing up Cliff Michelmore, the canteen workers, the lonely planners in their eyries, and even the oaf who keeps knocking things over in a corner of the studio during all the tense bits. Keep it up, my friends; for despite all horrid critics and belittlers, you are making giant strides.

HENRY TURTON



"When did it start—this feeling that your footsteps were dogged?"

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Reg'd at the G.P.O. as a Newspaper. Entered as 2nd-class Mail Matter at the New York, N.Y., P.O., 1903. Postage of this issue: Gt. Britain and Eire 2½d.; Canada 1d.* Elsewhere Overseas 3½d.† Mark Wrapper top left-hand corner **"Canadian Magazine Post" †"Printed Papers—Reduced Rate."

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